FRIDAY 14 MARCH 1997

(IR45p) 40p

THE TABLOID The cancer that went into space



THE TABLOID

Ten pages of music from Bach to the Monkees



COMMENT Peregrine Worsthorne on the real threat to Britain page 19

Slaughter on the Isle of Peace

Middle East tension rises over 'senseless' schoolgirl killings

Patrick Cockburn Naharim, Jordan Valley

The Middle East was plunged unforeseen proportions, when a Jordanian soldier fired his Jordan valley, killing seven and daman territory but where Is-

of unprecedented strain in reand 14, came from an Orthodox lations between Jordan and Is- Jewish school at Beit Shemesh rael, and even if the killer, west of Jerusalem, and were proves to have been deranged, on a three-day bus, tour of the massacre will further poison northern Israel. "All the girls the political atmosphere. Non screamed and cried and ran are yesterday's killings likely to



relations between Israel and the

The killing of the children Israeli Prime Minister, saying was cold-blooded and unpro that as a result of his policies voked. "He started shooting. Arabs and Israelis were "fast from a nearby hill and ran to- sliding towards an abyss of wards the children, still firing tre away," said an eyewitness.. "He was aiming at the head. He wanted to kill."

the Jordan river over an old Bailey bridge, passing through officers manning the border old minefields, and had just got posts at Naharim yesterday. out of their bus amid fields of yellow mustard when the gun- were still co-operating. man, a 26-year-old army driver, identified as Ahmed Mousa, racli commander on the West

was overpowered by other Jordanian soldiers when he paused yesterday into a new crisis of to put a fresh clip of ammunition in his rifle. The shooting took place in the so-called assaulf rifle at a group of Israeli Island of Peace, at Naharim, on schoolgirls sightseeing in the the Jordan river, which is Jordan river, which is Jordan river, which is Jordan river.

raelis are free to visit. The murders follow a period ... The girls, all aged between 12 away into the bushes to hide."

said Hila Ivri, 14, later in hospital. "Many girls were hurt and bloody. I was hit in the leg. I saw the gunman. He was a bad gny with big eyes. I saw a girl who was int in the shoulder. She rolled over in the bushes and stopped breathing. King Hussein of Jordan, who

was on an official visit to Spain. said he would immediately fly home, postponing his meeting with President Bill Clinton next week. He said the killings had affected him as if the bullets had been fired "at me and my sons and daughters". In Washington, Mr Inton said it was a "senseless demai of a future for these

Relations between Israel and be an end of the bloodshed; in Jordan were already deteriorating. At the weekend, King Arabs, one atroofy is usually Hussem wrote an angry letter answered by another to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Several Israeli ministers yesterday accused King Hussein of creating the atmosphere in which the attack at Naharim

The schoolgirls had crossed took place.

Tordan river over an old However, Israeli and Jordan were keen to show that they

> General Uzi Dayan, the Is-Bank and in the Jordan valley, ning a checkpoint through



crossed into Jordan to visit some of the wounded girls who had been taken to hospital in the nearby village of Shuma. This is a warm frontier in the good sense," said one Israeli

But there were more covert signs that relations were strained. A Jordan captain man-

which the girls had passed ad-mitted he and his men had been told to hand in their ammunition clips. One Israeli witness claimed Jordanian soldiers at first "stood around" and did nothing when the shooting began. Others said that at first the Jordanians would not allow Israeli first aid teams to enter

their territory. David Levy, the

Israeli Foreign Minister, said: "Who knows how many of these gun-toting lunatics are waiting for the green light in the form of a remark in which Israel is being described in the way it is being described today."

The shooting took place on a piece of land which had been heavily fortified prior to the is-

1994. At the crossing point into Jordan, there are still the rewith machine-gun slits, a blown bridge and red notices with a skull and crossbones, warning of mines in Arabic, Hebrew and shippers in Hebron, killing 29. English. When the peace treaty was signed, Jordan gained sovereignty but Israelis could farm raeli-Jordanian peace treaty of the land and visit as tourists.

The massacre prompted some to draw analogies with mains of concrete pillboxes Baruch Goldstein, the Israeli army reserve captain who three years ago in Hebron fired into the backs of Palestinian wor-

"This place is full of crazy people, "said an Israeli army colonel, commanding a reserve unit on a hilltop at Naharim.

The killing will increase the sense of erisis in the region. It may relieve the international pressure on Mr Netanyahu not to build a Jewish settlement at Har Homa, in Jerusalem, Nothing is known of Ahmed Moussa, the gunman, other than he came from a nearby Jordanian

Navy sails in as Albania collapses

trapped in the anarchy-gripped country. The HMS Birmingham and HMS Exercer swong into action after officials postponed an attempt to evacuate

the stranded Britons by air.
"It is extremely difficult to get anything in by air, a Foreign Of-fice spokesman said. "There are people running around the airport with weapons. There is a great deal of indiscriminate fir-

yesterday. Some 400 foreigners, including 330 Italians, were evacuated by helicopter from Durres on to Italian naval vessels in the Adriatic Sea. US forces were preparing to rescue about 2,000 Americans in Albania.

- Across virtually the whole country, it has become a case of every man for himself and for every man a gun. "It was fine un-til two days ago, and then they started raiding the armouries," said Gaenor Hall, a British missionary based in the northern town of Pisharrez. "There's a lot of anarchy, a lot of people stealing flour from the army barracks," added her colleague,



in Tirana

Most police appear to have pulled out of Tirana, and many conscripts have deserted their positions. In Elbasan, an indusmal town in a valley near Tirana, a moh attacked two large military bases on the edge of town at about 8pm on Wednesday night, and the soldiers simply withdrew. The garrison's commander, still in uniform, was in tears vesterday morning as people streamed past him carrying don't think people here want

as 8 and 9 brandished rifles, adding to the terrifying sense of lawlessness

rifles, machine-guns, uniforms As looters ransacked military

and gas masks. Boys as young as 8 and 9 brandished rifles and hauled ammunition boxes, adding to the terrifying sense of

supplies at will, a building smonldered in the distance. "I

in southern Albania, does not appear to control anything. Tirana airport is out of government hands and, although neither the army nor police seem to want a fight, gangsters are making the most of this tu-

division, half a mile away, dormi-tory buildings were ablaze as gyp-sies hoisted tables, chairs and

cupboards on to horse-drawn

carts. Hundreds of other locals for-

aged for guns, and all around, every

minute, was the crackleof gunfire,

ment, formed to appease rebels

The new caretaker govern-

meaningless but dangerous.

multuous period of mob rule. The capital's streets were quiet yesterday afternoon, save

fire. As night fell, groups of armed civilians began to move freely around the city and the

gunfire became more frequent. At the headquarters of a tank During the southern uprising of the past 10 days, gunmen have to some extent policed the anti-Berisha mutiny sparked last month by the collapse of corrupt investment schemes. The gunmen have formed blockades, checked documents and hound-

ed out secret policemen. basan, where guns are now selling at \$5 (£3) a piece, public order has all but disintegrated. "This is the spirit of Albania, born of the eagle. They like this," one man said, pointing at a small boy with a gas-mask and a gun. Further reporting by Adrian Hadland

Andrew Gumbel, page 18

Two Royal Navy destroyers probably with Western assis-were steaming towards the Al-banian coast last night as the Government prepared to rescue about 120 British nationals uated on a ferry bound for Italy any political party. We're against Berisha because he took Boys as young our money," said Ilir Kamami, an Elbasan resident.

With President Sali Berisha's

soldiers and police having surrendered control of most towns to civilians armed with stolen guns, it appeared that the Al-baman leader faced little choice last night but to flee his country.

QUICKLY

Labour's 25-point lead Labour has a 25-point lead in today's Hanris poll for The Indeendent, with seven weeks until the general election. It is on 52 per cent, one point lower than last week's poli. The Tories are three down on 27 per cent, and the Liberal Democrats up 4 to 14 per cent. Page 6

South West cuts

South West Trains, dubbed the worst line in Britain, is planning to cut rush-hour rail services from its summer schedules, acby The Independent. Page 3 pricing of a complex financial in- Owen, has also agreed to for- touch with the regulators but we

Bonuses lost in NatWest scandal

The Serious Fraud Office was NatWest after bonnses worth scandal in its investment bank-ing arm. Meanwhile, £8m in bonuses

ing arm.

The Bank of England and due to a small group of executives gulators were also being tives in its debt derivatives huskept informed as it emerged that the affair has left a £90m black hole in Nat West Markets. The losses centre round the mis-

Four senior employees of act of leadership." last night standing by to go into
NatWest Markets were yesterNatWest after bonnses worth
day suspended from duty penda handful of executives over a and forensic accountants

> ness, thought to number about eight, will not now be paid. The chief executive of

strument known as interest rate go £200,000 of his £500,000 annual bonus for last year as "an

The trader responsible for the loss, Kyriacos Papouis, has al-Lim a piece were docked from ing further inquiries by lawyers ready left Nat West and his immediate boss has also been suspended. A spokeswoman for the SFO said last night: "NatWest and its professional advisers have been in touch with us concerning their review of NatWest Markets interest rate options trading. We are moni-Nat West Markets, Martin toring the situation and are in

have not yel begun an investi-

The internal investigation has not uncovered any evidence that the mispricing was carried out for personal gain. But investigators have established that the trades in question were transferred between different accounts, making them more difficult to detect. NatWest said the practice had been going on since late

1994 but had only come to light this February. Reports, page 20







Leading Articles17 THE TABLOID



Vietnamese woman fined £2,000 for rhino horn cures

A Vietnamese woman was fined £2,000 yesterday for selling herbal remedies made from the powdered bones of eodangered species from a shop in Portsmouth, Hampshire.

In the first prosecution of its kind io Britain, Bang Hue Thi, 32, admitted stocking laryngitis pills cootaining rhino born and sticky plasters made up of tiger and leopard bones. She bought the items in Hong Kong for about £500, intending to sell them to the Chinese community in the Portsmouth area for a total profit of

£200, the city's magistrates were told.

She was arrested after police raided her shop - Sun Hung Chang and found 12 boxes of the laryngitis pills and more than 400 packets of sticky plasters. Thi admitted four charges under the control-in-trade-of-endangered-species regulations.

Royal no-show fuels election fever

The Queen's non-appearance at the Cheltenham Gold Cup yesterday fuelled speculation that the Prime Minister was on his way to Downing Street to seek the dissolution of Parliament for a

general election oo 1 May.
Instead, John Major will put his troops on an election footing in a speech at the Tory Party Central Council in Bath tomorrow but is not expected to announce the date until next week.

The alarm was so high that, according to one ITN source, ITN scrambled a helicopter to hover over the Prime Minister's route to the Palace to capture the historic footage. ITN last night said it was not on a special job; it was on the way back from Portland and was "taking shots for use in future reports".

Ban plan for sex abuser NHS staff

A review of powers to impose a lifetime ban oo NHS staff who have committed child abuse, rape and murder, was announced last night by Stepheo Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health and

The Department of Health said last night: "There has been concern over receot months that there is oo power to impose life bans on nurses or other staff who have carried out serious offences such as rape, murder or acts of paedophilia."

BBC braces for parties' poll carping



The BBC is braced for legal action over its coverage of the general election eveo before the election has been called. Sir Christopher Blaod, chairman of the BBC's board of governors, told the Broadcasting Press Guild esterday he expects legal challeoges from small parties. He hlamed loosely drawn regulations for leaving the way opeo to parties with a gripe to seek judicial review.

The Referendum Party is already taking legal advice concerning

Mirror group reaches record profits

Mirror Group, which has a 46.4 per cent stake in Newspaper Publishing, owner of *The Independent*, yesterday posted record profits of £82.2m for 1996, up 6.6 per cent. Operating losses at *The* Independent and its sister title the Independent on Sunday were cut

by 43 per cent while revenue rose almost 13 per cent.

Mirror Group said *The Independent's* losses were at least half those of the Guardian and its Suoday stablemate, the Observer. Analysts reckon that the Guardian/Observer racked up losses of about £11m last year.

Patrick Tooher about £11m last year.

Mirror Group results, page 21

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

N1ands FI5.00
haly 14,500
Madeira Esc325
Matta 43 cents
Norway Nar20
Portugal Esc325
Spam Pts300
SwedenSw21
Switzerland . Sir4.00
USA\$3.00

Ar mail, 13 weeks: Europe £110.76; Zone 1 (Markile East, America, Africa and India: £184.06; Zone 2 (Far East and Australasia: £206,70. To order, please send cheque payable to Johnsons Internacional Media Services led to 42 Mathembour, London E14 9TR or telephone 0171 538 8288. Credit cards welcom

BACK ISSUES Back assues of the Independent are available from: Historic Newspapers, Letephone 01988 840370.

CASH BONUS

PLUS 2.5% DISCOUNT

our rate by 2.5% for 12 months. We'll also send you a

cheque for 2.5% of the loan (up to £4,000) after

completion. Call us now for a personal quotation in

Get much more with

WOOLWICH

DIRECT

0645 75 75 75

minutes, quoting reference: IY143.

You're never too busy to get

a better mortgaga. With the

Cashback Plus Mortgage from

Woolwich Oirect, borrow up to 75%

of our valuation and we'll reduce



Sweet faced nun who will be the new Mother Teresa

Sister Nirmala, a sweet-faced nun who grew up in an indian army family of the highest Hindu caste and left eventhing to look the Mariante Mariante in the Mariante Ma and left everything to join the Missionaries of Charity, was elected Superior General of the order yesterday after six weeks of deliberation. She will be the sucessor to the frail Mother Teresa, 83, who retains the title of Mother General.

"God will give me the courage to carry out our work with the guidance of Mother Teresa," she told reporters at the Missionaries of Charity headquarters in Calcutta. "Please pray for ma."

Personally, I believa that the sisters, after long deliberation, have chosen the best combination of spian Indian civil servant who wrote a biography of the Nobel Peace laureate and frequently visits her missions. "She has warmth and faith, and comes closa to the only role model that they've had for the last 50 years.

In Calcutta, garlands of chrysanthemums, lasmine, and roses arrived at the door of the Mother House, where the order's 126 most senior nuns had been clolstered since their return from a spiritual retreat in the West Bengal countryside.

Nirmala, who normally spends half her day in prayer as head of the Contemplative Wing, leads devotees to express spirituality, but has also proved to ba an exacting manager while directing an early mission in Panama, and in later posts in Europe and the US. Though 63, she looks a decade younger, and is con-

siderable more youthful than Sister Frederick, who

siderably more youthful than Sister Frederick; who was widely lipped for the position.

Sister Nirmala has often wheeled Mother Teresa to prayers since the nun's detendrating physical condition, after three heart attacks, has wracked her with acute back pains. Mother Teresa, who lounded her or der in 1947 to shelter Calcutta's poor and homeless, and allow them a dignity in death, secured Vaticati permission to step down in 1990, but was unanimously, re-elected. As head of the Missionaries of Charly, Sister Nirmala, the former Missiy Joshi, will oversee a multinational organization with 517 certifies around the ti-national organization with 517 centres around the world. More than 4000 nurs in blue transied with sains staff the orphanages, Aids hospices, mental homes; and basic medical clinics, alongside numerous lay vol-

"I pray that she will be able to carry out her job with God's blessings." Mother Teresa told reporters after the near unanimous choice was announced.

Relatives of Sister Nirmala expressed pride and joy over her selection and said she deserved the honour because of her sacrifices. "We are very happy." Re-jendra Prasad Joshi, the nun's younger brother, said.

in the Nepali capital Kathmandu. Sister Frederick, who had been considered one of the front-numers for the post of superior general and was elected the second-ranking nun, said: "God is always working out the best thing for us."

Jan McGirk, New Dethi

briefing

Medical researchers accept funding from tobacco firms

Medical researchers have accepted funding from the tobacco Medical researchers have accepted funding from the too accound industry for almost 300 projects in recent years, despite condemnation of such funding by the country's leading medical organisations. A survey by the Wellcome Trust shows that the tobacco manufacturers spent at least £19m on biomedical research between 1988 and 1994, resulting in 269 research papers.

The trust's survey was prompted by the furore last summer when it was revealed that BAT Industries, owner of British American Tobacco, was funding a Medical Research Council unit in Newcastle and a chair at Cambridge University.

"Not only is smoking tobacco harmful to health but there is a

Newcastle and a chair at Cambridge University.

"Not only is smoking tobacco harmful to health but there is a
belief that the companies will attempt to silence researchers whose
findings are unpalatable," said Dr Grant Lewison, from the trust's
Unit for Policy Research in Science and Medicine.

He cites the example of a scientist in the US who was told that
his research funds would be cut off if he published his results,
which showed that inhaling cigarette smoke caused throat capacities.

which showed that inhaling cigarette smoke caused throat cancer in certain animals - a threat that was carried out after publication. Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association.

said: "It is a sign of how desperate researchers are for funding. But there is no such thing as n free lunch."

Annabel Ferriman

TECHNOLOGY

Virtual Tinseltown on the horizon

Highly paid screen actors could ultimately find themselves being replaced – by computer software. The prospect of what actors might view as Nightmare in Tinsel Town was raised at a film and television conference in Glasgow yesterday. Scientists at Geneva University have already made an experimental 10-minute short, Rendezvous in Montreal, in which a computer-generated Humphrey

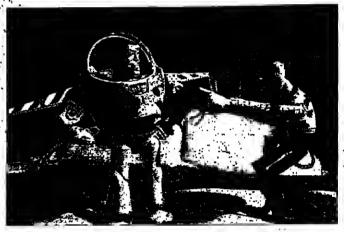
)

Rendezrous in Montreal, in which a computer-generated manipurey
Bogart and Marilyn Monroe conduct an affair.

Yesterday, Professor Robin Baker of Ravensbourne College,
Kent, an expert on computer-generated images and film
technology, told the Robotix 97 Screen Wizards festival that if
Hollywood decided to throw money at the concept, virtual actors,
or "vactors", could become a reality in two or three years.

What would be seen by filmgoers would not be computercontrolled models or robots, but "actors" created in 3-D form an a

computer screen, which is then filmed. Prof Baker views this as the next logical step in the development of screen technology. Similar techniques were used by Hollywood. "If you think of Toy Story (below), you are not all that far away from it," he said.



WHITEHALL

Parliamentary committees blocked

Parliamentary select committees are being kept in the dark by Government departments. MPs were told vesterday. Condemning as "unacceptable" the refusal of Whitehall to give access to key civil service witnesses, a report from the Commons Liaison Committee added: "It is in the area of provision of documents that most dificulties have arisen.

"There is a basic problem facing committees in so far as they are not always aware of the information and documents available in departments which are germane to their inquiries. Some committees have complained of the difficulties in discerning the

existence of documents. "It should be the duty of departments to ensure that select committees are furnished with any important information which appears to be relevant to their inquiries without waiting to be asked for it specifically."

Liaison Committee, First Report; session 1996-97. The Work of Select Committees. Vol 1. HC 323-L Stationery Office, £14.70.

Blood clot risk from HRT

Women on hormone replacement therapy face an increased risk of blood clots in the legs and lungs during their first year of treatment, a study reveals today. The risk is highest during the first six months when a woman using HRT is four or five times more likely to suffer clots than a non-user. This falls to a threefold greater risk after six months. After a year, the risk to HRT

users is no more than it is for non-users.

Spanish researchers studied medical records of nearly 350,000 UK women aged 50-79. The type of treatment - high or low dose, pills or patches - did not appear to make any difference to the

results.
The findings by doctors from Novartis Pharmaceuticals,
Barcelona, and Universidad Complutense, Madrid, were published today in the British Medical Journal.

In a separate study, researchers in Finland found that people donating blood may well be doing themselves a service, as well as helping the NHS. Analysis of 2,700 middle-aged men showed that giving blood could reduce the risk of heart attack by as much as 86 per cent. The mechanism could be the result of depletion of the body's iron reserves, say the researchers from the University of Kuopio, also writing in the British Medical Journal

Annabel Ferriman

Fresh evidence for life on Mars

Evidence that Mars once fostered life, at least in microbial form, is supported by two papers published in the journal Science today. The findings are likely to spark intense debate in Houston, Texas. oext week, when an international gathering of geochemists and biologists have set aside two days of a week-long conference programme solely to debate results from examination of samples from the meteorite ALH84001.

The first paper, by a team from the California Institute of Technology, found that magnetic grains inside the meteorite cooled in the presence of a strong magnetic field on Mars about 4 billion years ago, but were not reheated. This would back up the theory put forward last August by Nasa scientists, who suggested that carbonaceous deposits were formed by living organisms, rather than high-temperature reactions.

The second paper, which examines the ratios of carbon isotopes within the carbonate deposits, also suggests they were formed at low temperatures. "Everything we see is consistent with biological activity," said John Valley, a geochemist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "Though I still wouldn't rule out low-temperature inorganic processes. We have not proven that this represents life on Mars, but we have disproven the high-temperature hypothesis." Charles Arthur



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING Recycled paper made up 41.2% of _ the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

Hong Kong gives vote of confidence in Governor

He may be running a lame-duck administration, and the Chinesa government may record him as the Whore of the East and a Triple Violator, but the people of Hong Kong like Chris Patten.

The last Governor of Hong Kong appears to be achieving a higher level of satisfaction than his successor, Tung Chee-hwa, who will head the first postcolonial government.

A public opinion survey released yesterday shows that 58 per cent of those questioned were "somewhat satisfied" with Mr Patten's performance, compared with 48 per cent who expressed a similar view about Mr Tung.

However, the Governor also appears to annoy more people than Mr Tung, as 26 par cent of those in the survey declared thamselves to be "somewhat dissatisfied" with his performance, compared to only 19 per cent who held this opinion about nis successor.

The survey results are surprising because Mr Tung appeared to be riding high in the polls following his appointment by Peking last year.

This poll of 546 people was taken last month, at a time when Mr Tung was under fire for supporting the watering down of human rights legislation which other polls found to be a cause for losing popular aupport.

The poll was conducted by tha Hong Kong Transition Project, the most thorough opinion tracking aurvey of popular attitudes towards the transition from British to Chinesa rule. Michael DeGolyer,



the project's director, is not convinced that the latest results show that Mr Tung is unpopular. He says the real message that one in five people have yet to make up their minds about their new leader.

He is, however, certain that it will be very difficult for the Incoming government to turn around and blame its predecessor" for problems it is likely to face. Satisfaction with the current government is higher than at any time since 1993. Seventy-three per cent of those ques-tioned declared themselves to be happy with the outgoing administration, alongsida a record 90 per cent who were satisfied with their lives in Hong Kong.

Perhaps sensing that he needs to polish his image a little, Mr Tung has hired Irena Yau to run his media relations. Mrs Yau, Incidentally, ran tha information department of Chris Patten's edministration until this Steven Vines, Hong Kong

'Russian gang' link to Cosby murder

One man was under arrest yesterday and two other people were being questioned by police investigating the murder of Bill Cosby's son. The arrest resulted from a tip that "a Russian gang member" was involved, according to media reports in Los

Prosecutors are expected to file murder charges against the suspect soon, police chief Willie Williams told a latenight news conference. When the arrest was made in the San Famendo Valley on Wednesday night, investigators seized

evidence linking the man to the roadsida killing of Ennis Cosby on 16 January, said Mr Williams. Ha did not give the man'a name, but said he is believed to be

a Los Angeles resident. The death of Mr Cosby, 27, a doctoral candidate in special education at Columbia University, prompted a huge public outpouring of sympathy. He was shot to death while changing a flat tyre on his Marcedes convertible near a freeway offramp in a prosperous area.

AP, Los Angeles

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT

عكذا من الأصل

Worst railway' to cut rush-hour services

Randeep Ramesh Transport Correspondent

South West Trains, dubbed the worst line in the country, is planning to cut rush-hour services. from its summer schedules, according to documents obtained by the Independent.

The company, which has already wiped 39 trains from its daily timetables after laying off 70 drivers - 10 per cent of the workforce - will also replace rationalise the local service in from the timetable.

through trains in the rush hour with connecting services, forcing passengers to change at two stations in order to get to their destination.

SWT, owned by the Stagecoach bus company, runs the largest commuter service and was the first line to be privatised. According to its "Train Service Proposals", SWT plans "to

period."

Trains to be scrapped include the 7.33am Eastleigh-to-Portsmouth and the busy afternoon ride from Portsmouth to Southampton. The proposals also mean late-night passengers between Portsmouth and Southampton will face a change of train at Eastleigh. Another late service from Eastleigh to Portsmouth will be dropped

dropped from the company's summer timetable. The 7.15am train from Lymington Pier to Waterloo will only go as far as Brockenhurst, which will cost the commuter towns of Ashurst,

Totton and Redbridge a service into London. The moves come into force with the summer timetable in June and have been agreed by Opraf, the office of passenger franchising which let the service,

Many stations will also be and Railtrack, the company which co-ordinates the scheoules between rail firms.

Rail-passenger groups said their warnings had been ignoted. These services were als accepted. not protected by the 'passengerservice requirements' and hence we have seen them cut as we predicted, said a spokesman for the Railway Development Society. Both the passenger watchdog, the rail-users con- had out trains and failed to meet

jected to the changes. Insiders said there was little time to gauge public reaction because of the rush to get the propos-

The proposals which were condemned vesterday by Opposition MPs and passenger groups and come a week after rail enthusiasts claimed private firms in the South of England sultative committee, and agreed targets for late depar-

umes. What we are beginning to see is the extent of the cutbacks which companies are imposing on travellers in a mad rush to cut the grant from the government and push up their profits," said Jonathan Bray, a spokesman for Save Our Railways, an anti-rail privatisation

lobby group. The Labour Party said that the "franchising director is on his last ride."

A spokesman for Glenda Jackson, Labour's junior transport spokesman, said- "Rail services are now disintegrating as rapidly as the Government. Ministers need to step in and control the monster they have created.

A spokeswoman for SWT said last night: "Some services have been cut in a bid to reduce over-crowding on trains in the London area.

Hazardous juurney, page 24

Fact or fiction. Will the real Brett Allen please stand up?

Brett Allen is innocent

horizon

Control of the second - 17 - 17 - 12 M Parties of the

------ (1-2)2

4992 to the

State of the state of Carlotte Car

es block

tice, perhaps, a man wronged?
The name has been emblazoned on buildings all over the country much to the bemuse-

Allen came face to face with the 'sually publisher of a book whose advertising campaign takes his

Who is Brett Allen?" he Esked the marketing director of-Random House. "It's a fictional character - a woman," came

ark McCallum's reply.
"Is there a real Brett Allea?" Mark McCallum's reply.

· Allen," replied Mr McCallum, "Brett Allen is innocent" the faintly amused "Apparently billboards have been screaming they are being driven crazy by yet another miscardage of justice, perhaps, a man wronged? where. We've gone for it big

author." "I wouldn't like to be the real ment of Brett Allen, the student. 'Brett Allen!" exclaimed-the from St Albans who has become real Mr Allen. Mr McCallum entangled in a promotional agreed. He was supposed to be campaign for a new novel. saying his life has been made a

don to clear his name. Posters have been plastered on walls outside law courts, police sta-tions and railway stations to give the impression of a subversive prisoner protest campaign. The words were beained into the sky ate with the same name.

for the whole of London to see "Obviously I want to disasand crime correspondents were sociate myself from it. Because for the whole of London to see he continued. "Somebody's and crime correspondents were

time - to raise the profile of the

Yesterday, the real Brett misery by this," he remarked ca-



anonymously urged to take up

Yesterday it was revealed that it was all part of a Saatchi and Saatchi's campaign to promote The Final Judgement, in which a woman called Brett Allen is accused of the murder

But in raising the profile of their best-selling American author, Richard North Patterson, Random House has madvertently trodden on the toes of the 20-year-old psychology gradu-

I'm an honest guy I don't really want anyone to mistake me

for heing a criminal." He first heard about the campaign from his uncle who had seen a poster at Waterloo Station. "I thought he was winding me up at first - but then he sounded quite serious. My dad

was concerned. "If it had been 'Brett Allen is great' or 'Brett Allen is cool' I wouldn't have minded that. Or even Who is Brett Allen? - that would have been OK."

Whilst he hopes that it will work in his favour, his brush with fame has already alerted

him to its price. "I've had calls the future. I'm a little supersti-from people who I don't know. It could come true. That's You look at the colour display and it's a withheld number. It

becomes a bit smister." And the paranoia bas begun to creep in. "I'm kind of worried that to a certain extent it's

lurking in the deep recesses of

my mind." Saatchi and Saatchi was delighted to hear of Mr Allen's existence. "I do think it's an excellent twist that there's a real

spokeswoman. "It's quite amazing that it's affected him enough to call you. Obviously the campaign must be provoking some

And when Mr McCallum heard that he had in fact been

hood that ultimately someone had the time even to say, 'Hey.

that's me'. He dismissed any suggestion that Mr Allen may suffer from the publicity. "I really would be very surprised if it had any speaking to the real Mr Allen, particular impact on his life," he

Red noses offer bouquet to young homeless

As Agnes and Rachel sit on the concrete step talking to 22-year-old Chris, the London sky brightens. The two women, one from West Africa, the other rom Devon, live thousands of miles apart but they have a com-mon purpose: helping young people off the streets and back into society.

Tamale is an impoverished city in north Ghana, where Agnes Chiravira, 38, is co-ordinator of a project which belos children - some as young as three but most in their early icens - to get off the streets and back into the mainstream

Back in Britain, 39-year-old Rachel Crane works at the London Connection a day centre for homeless young people which offers advice, support and a warm place to meet for

Both projects are heavily funded by Comic Relief, which has raised £112m for disadvantaged people in Britain and Africa since comedian Lenny Henry first introduced Red Nose Day mine years ago.
The pair are about to embark

on a 10-day parmership, in which they will sump stories and advice, pick up tips and discuss the problems of helping young people who are homeless.

"I am amazed at the similanties between homelessness m Britain and Ghana," says Rachel. The causes seem to be so similar. There is often the trauma of family break-up and the grip of poverty. Homelessness is the same the world

be naive to say that things are

On first inspection, the prob-lems of dealing with the home—their youngsters are somehow lems of dealing with the home—their youngsters are somehow—their youngsters are youngsters a no be quite similar, but it would counterparts. "We don't have any problems with drugs and we don't have any problems with al-cohol, so our children seem a lot Agres, whose year-one into concern. They don't shout and less children are generally old-Relief television specificaters for more than 600 quieter. They don't shout and less children are generally old-Relief television specifications and all the starting at 7pm on BBC1. children on a daily basis, thinks

Nosing along: The actors Rupert Graves and Tara Fitzgerald dressed up for Comic Relief's Red Nose Day "It just about extreme poverty. We have no welfare system so a lot of the children are very young when they are forced to

live on the streets. By contrast, Britain's home-

the reach 16. And illegal drugs. glue and alcohol are an easy way to escape the misery of failing in the sometimes judgmental eyes of family and society.

Yet when Agnes sits down to talk to Chris, the differences in their background and experience evaporate into the Spring

The young Glaswegian, who has been homeless for six years, is at first embarrassed to talk about his current situation, but as the African woman, unfamiliar with the streets of Lon-don, puts her hand on his knee and stares into his bloodshot eyes, he starts to relax.

"You just have to be positive because the rest of your life is before you," she tells Chris. "I say this to all my children. 'Never give up hope and never say you are desperate." Chris nods his head, appearing to agree with this optimistic view

The women have already decided to swap a couple of ideas. Agnes is particularly impressed with London Connection's cheap meals service and Rachel likes the concept of helping young homeless to set up their own artisan

As we leave the young man, sitting on his step in the busy Soho street, Agnes turns round to look at him. "When I first started working with the children I used to cry every day," she says with tears in her eyes. Perhaps things will be the same in London after all.

Events are taking place throughout the United Kingdom in aid of Comic Relief today, including a celebrity fun run through the City of London, a tripe-cating record at-tempt in West Yorkshire and a sponsored abself down the Avon Gorge. The day culminates in a seven-bour Comic Relief television special



Get on the ball with Britain's only money back credit card

The new Alliance & Leicester Credit Card gives you money back on every purchase, every year! There's no other card like it in the U.K. today!

Just look at all the advantages you enjoy:

money back on every purchase, every year

double money back of up to 2% in 1997

no annual fee – unlike many other credit cards

Dup to 46 days interest-free credit

• free Purchase Protection

Low standard rates of 17.9% APR and 12.9% APR on transferred balances" until they are repaid

_ ALLIANCE **LEICESTER**



YES - please send my FREE Information Pack on the new Alliance & Leicester money back credit cord. The money back credit card Post to: Alliance & Leicester Credit Cards, FREEPOST, 58-62 Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8PE, (No stamp needed.)

Unfriendly berth as floating prison arrives from America



tt is not pretty, and it is not wel-come. Britain's first floating day inching its way into Portland

barge, the 100ft-tall HM Prison Weare, designed to hold 480 low-

risk prisoners, made its grand entrance at midday. There was no

PHONES

Council trips lead to police inquiry

The police have been called in to investigate the running of Labour-controlled Doncaster Council, after a critical report by the district auditor pub-lished earlier this year.

Investigations by South Yorkshire Police's Commercial Branch are thought to focus on the expenses claims of some councilors who went on foreign trips. The district auditor's report drew attention to the fact that trips to various parts of the world, including China, Japan, Poland, Sweden and the United States, appeared not to have been authorised, and had not been the subject of any reports about their purpose to other councillors.

Yesterday, a police spokesman said that officers were "analysing a number of docu-ments" following a meeting with the district auditor but it was "too early to say whether there is any evidence of any criminal offence having being

The news of the police inestigation came as it emerged that the scope of the district auditor's investigations have been widened to include the actions of several council officials who are thought to have gone on overseas trips. Because of the police investigations, a second report by the district auditor, scheduled to be published later this month, will probably now not be issued until after the

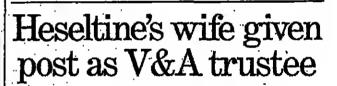
general election. The Labour Party has also widened the scope of its own enquiries into the affair. Neil Swan, a former councillor who has written to Councillor who has written to Tony Blair about his concerns that the council was being run by a small group within the Labour party, called the Miners' Community Group, has been told in response that the

whole local party is being investigated. In response to his letter, Sally Morgan, the head of party li-aison, said that "the procedure and conduct of Doncaster District are under scrutiny". The Labour Party had previously been reluctant to say it was investigating its councillors, arguing that it was awaiting the second report of the district auditor.

However, Mr Blair's office has received a wide range of complaints about the running of the local party and the role of the Miners' Community Group, and the party leader is known to be keen to ensure that Labour has a clean image in local government.

Mr Swan welcomed the par-ty's investigation: "I don't sup-pose they will do anything before the general election, but I hope that afterwards they are going to throw a lot of people out of the party to enable Doncaster to make a fresh start."

Last week, Peter Welsh, the leader of the council, and Ray Stockhill, the deputy leader, stood down form their posts because of the criticisms in the



Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Anne Heseltine, wife of the deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, was last night appointed by John Major as a trustee of the Victoria and Albert Museum for the next five ber of the Tate Gallery British years. The role is not remu-

Mrs Heseltine is currently a trustee of the Imperial War Museum, but Downing Street said she would stand down

tion so close, may raise a few eyebrows, but Mrs Heseltine has a long-term interest in the V & A, which houses collections of fine art, craft and design. She has been a visitor of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford since 1989 and is also a memart consultative committee.

Professor Frayling, rector of the Royal College of Art, becomes an ex-officio member of the V and A board of trustees and like when her present work there Mrs Heseltine, Professor was completed. The new appointment, with a general elec- the Ashmolean, also joins.



Plus line rental and one-off connection fee

NOKIA

Mobile Phone

■ Up to 80 minutes tall hours standby time. ■ 224 alphanament m ■ One touch dialling for the property of the

CURRYS PRICE

MOTOROLA

■ Up to 110 minutes calityme/15 hours standby

CURRYS PRICE

.999-

Mobile Phone

842E 296 9288

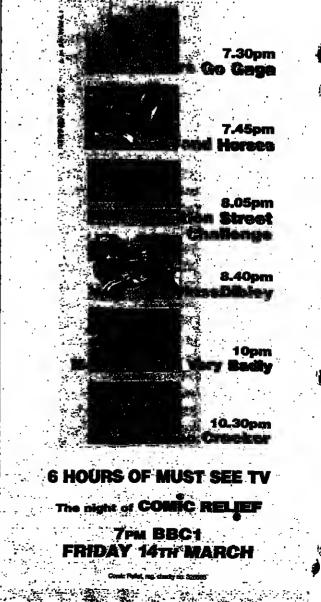
BRITAIN'S

BIGGEST

ELECTRICAL

STORE





6 OF THE BEST

EXCLUSIONS DIAMOND TARGET

Longest off-peak period: 13 hours a day. 6pm-7am

Saturday and Sunday. Lowest off-peak call rates.
 FREE VoiceMail retrieval on

Billing by the second.

all tariffs.

Monday-Friday plus all day

news

Robots extend the extra strong arm of friendship

Robots were always meant to to hold a weight equivalent to four kilogram bags of sugar. which is self-contained apart from hatteries and two printed circuit boards.

Built by a team at the in Glasgow's McLellan Gal-Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre leries, where a huge variety of and the engineering science department at Oxford University, the hand is intended to replace a human one and is Oxfordshire area have already operated by sensing the move-

BEST

7.5

3. 40P

should be more like a pair of glasses than a hip replacement," said Peter Kyberd, who helped develop the hand over the past

"It should be something you put on in the morning and just wear, that you don't need trainmg to use.

He is shown here operating the hand at the Robotiz show robots are on show for the next three days.

A number of amputees in the tried prototype versions of the hand, developed at a cost of £127,000. Dr Kyberd thinks The most important thing that, for the moment, it is more

muscles than by techniques requiring surgery, such as a direct attachment to the nerves that

a huge invasion," he said. "This is better in that it just uses surface attachment: you lease muscles to close and open it, and to touch and to squeeze. If it feels that what it is touching is slip-

ping, it will squeeze tighter. Kyberd says would be feasible for a robot hand, "though it would run the batter 's down

Top-secret US spy plane crashed on British base

SAS scrambled to protect aircraft, whose existence is officially denied

Christopher Beilamy Defence Correspondent and Timothy Walker

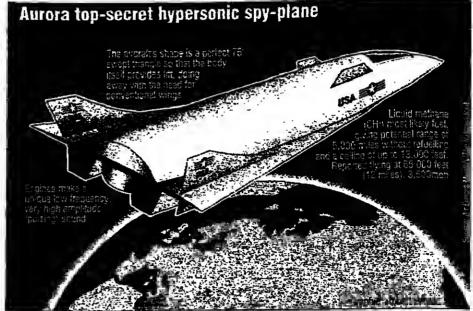
A top-secret United States spyplane which flies on the edge of space at five times the speed of sound crashed at the British experimental airbase at Bos-combe Down, Hampshire, in September 1994, according to a report in a leading military aviation journal. The SAS, the report said, was scrambled to throw a cordon round the wreckage, which was flown back to the US two days later,

The hypersonic reconnaissance aircraft, called Astra or Aurora, is believed to have been developed in the 1980s as a secret US government "black

Officially, the US denies the ircraft exists, although there have been many reports of mysterious sonic booms and sightings. This is the first report of such an aircraft crashing. The British Ministry of Def-

ence and the US Defense Department both denied the story yesterday but David Oliver, the editor of Air Forces Monthly, said that Royal Air Force officers had been among the sources in a twoyear investigation of the incident, and that he was sure the report

We have no doubt that an



incident did happen on the day in question and it has never been satisfactorily explained by the authorities", Mr Oliver said

القكذا من الأصل

yesterday. Air Forces Monthly is widely read in the MoD and in the defence industry, both in Britain and in the US. The report says the Astra (Advanced Stealth Reconnaissance Aircraft), or AV-6, or Aurora, crashed during take off on runway 23 at

Boscombe Down on the evening of 26 September 1994. London Air Traffic Control Centre was alerted that a serious incident had occurred. Later that night a witness reported seeing a tarpaulin screen around the front of the aircraft surrounded by a number of emergency vehicles. The witness said the rear section of the aircraft appeared to he raised, suggesting the nose-wheel had collapsed.

tographed men in plain clothes arriving during the night, who were later identified as SAS. The following day an Agusta 109 helicopter - one of four captured Argentine helicopters used exclusively by the special forces - arrived. "The SAS arrived twice", Mr Oliver said.

The wreckage was kept under a tarpaulin in the corner of a hangar but was seen by wit-

nesses when the doors were opened to bring out a Buccancer aircraft. The next unusual event was the arrival of a giant C-5 Galaxy transport plane, which is believed to have flown the wreckage back to the US on 28 September.

Reports of the new aircraft have been around for five years. In April 1992 a US radio ham intercepted a transmission from an aircraft descending from 65,000 feet, a height only reached by the Space Shuttle and the Cold War spyplane the U2 (later renamed TR1). Concorde, the highest and fastest civil aircraft, flies at 59.000 feet.

In August 1992 unexplained sonic booms were measured over the Netherlands, prompting questions in the Dutch parliament. The path of the aircraft suggested it had flown from RAF Machrihanish on the north-west coast of Scotland. In December that year The Independent reported claims by Sea that they had seen an Aurora and produced an artist's impression similar to the latest impression in Air Forces Monthly.

On other occasions radio hams intercepted transmissions from unidentified high-flying jets requesting permission to land at Machrihanish, though that airfield has now closed.

Philishave

YOU COULD WIN £0,000,000

WITH ANY PHILISHAVE.

IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO RENEW YOUR HOME INSURANCE. CALLING THIS NUMBER **COULD BE A** BETTER POLICY.

Ring the Freephone number below, and you'll get £5 off the first £50 you spend at Homebase, even if you don't take out a policy. And if you do, we'll give you £50 worth of vouchers to spend

FOR A FREE QUOTE FREEPHONE

on security products.

just think what you could do with a million pounds. New house, new car, new you. And all you need to do is buy a new Philishave. between 15th February and 12th April. When you do, pick up a competition form listing 10 Philishave features and benefits. Arrange them in the correct order and who knows? The next time you shave you'll not only look like a millionaire, you might feel like one too. And we don't stop there. Every entrant will receive a £5 cash-back voucher to use before 31st July '97. Either way, you're a winner.

Let's make things better.



hen Treasury questions started yesterday, there was a strange form occupying three or four inches of green leather on the third Tory bench, something that really shouldn't have been there. Whn was this hunched figure - the clothes hanging loosely off the bone: a jacket draped from the scapulae, a pair of trousers covering femurs and humeri, a lank lock of hair flopping over the bare skull? Give the spectre a scythe, and the picture would be

completed. That nld thespian Michael Fahricant - usually drawn to any celebrity or curiosity like a gaudy mnth to a flame suddenly learned the value of geographical discretion, and banished himself to a bench a long way away, from where he stared at Death with the round-eyed horror of a child.

It was ousted Tory rebel Sir George Gardiner, now the only representative on earth of Sir James Goldsmith and the Referendum party; a John the Baptist sent amongst us to tell of that which is yet to come. And this Baptist is well-cast. If he hasn't been dining only on locusts and ditch-water for twenty years, he sure looks as though he has. Except often



'Til Death us do part ...

he doesn't finish the locusts. Two rows in front of him. taking up enough space for five Gardiners, was his polar opposite, Ken Clarke. Keo has enough colnur in his cheeks for two men; George would fail to lend hue to a paramecium. Keo likes going to jazz clubs; George enjoys functals. Ken sinks pints of Federation ale; George sups bile from a broken glass.

Disappointingly Death didn't stay. He'd bagged his place and would return to stalk even bigger prey. With Prime Minister's questions coming, it wasn't the ventriloquist he was after, hu the dummy himself. While be popped back to the wilderness for a late lunch (root and two berries), the House filled up.

But wait! Here was Sir George again, replenished; the last berry still visible halfway down his neck. There was tumultuous applause, except it was, of course, from the Labour benches, one of whom raised this emanation with the Chancellor. "I

passionate supporter of the European Movement," Clarke quipped, "but he has moved away from me". At this, Death raised his face to the heavens and made one of those exaggerated faces of disgust that - in boy's school - is occasioned by sudden, unpleasant smells.

remember him as a

Here was the Prime Minister now, sitting down and having his shoulder tapped by Mr Fabricant. I couldn't hear what was said, but I imagine that Mr F said:

"Pssitt! PM! Gardiner's here!" And Major replied: Get your tongue out of my

ear, Fabricant! Then Prime Minister's questions began. And etween each nne, Sir Genrge was plucked upwards as though by some hidden heavenly hand, only to subside again, uncalled. It seemed as though his message was to doomed to go unheard. Then, to a huge cheer from Labour, Speaker Betty called his name. Once more he rose, and - with a modest inclination at the pelvis - bowed to the multitude

In his not unpleasant voice he referred in the campaign being run by the European Movement in scrap the pound, move to a federal Europe and slaughter the firstborn. Given that this organisation got money from the EU - and the EU got money from Britain, "how much of taxpayer's money has been laundered in this

Mr Major was undaunted There was, he said innocently, "quite a lot of money available on both sides". That was it; questions were over - and Death rattled out, surrounded by silent Tory MPs.



Top dogs: The Conservative MPs who won the Westminster Dog of the Year contest yesterday. From left: John Whittingdale, with Humphrey; Phillip Oppenheim, Vom and Peter Brooke, with Koki Photograph:Emma Boam

Labour in 25 point lead as pollsters face big test

Labour maintains a 25-point lead in today's Harris poll for The Independent, as polling companies prepare for an electioo which will test their new methods and their credibility.

The party, on 52 per cent, is one point lower than in last week's poll, with the Conservatives down three oo 27 per cent. Too much should oot be read into these changes, which could partly reflect the shift in the Liberal Democrat figure, up from 10 to 14 per cent - more

in line with other polls. A poll by Opinion Research Business, a hreakaway from doo Evening Standard showed a similar Labour lead of 24 points. The trend in polls is significant since the Wirral South by-election two weeks ago. Comparing three post-Wirral polls with the same polls before the by-election, Labour's lead widened by an average of five

With only seven weeks to go, a Tory party official sounded a faintly despairing note: "The longer we delay the election, the more the gap will close."

John Major must hope that the polls are as wrong as they were last time - and more. In 1992, the Tories won by a margin of 7.6 percentage points, THE INDEPENDENT HARRIS 🗅

Voting intentions Liberal Democrat

The Independent/Harris Poll results Harris Research Interviewed 1,040 adults face-to-face in their homes tween 7 February and 10 March.

rather than the ooe-point the final opinion polls. But it seems unlikely that they will be as far out this time.

The debate among pollsters over the past five years has been occasionally bad-tempered and partly inconclusive.

Most pollsters accepted that they would have to overhaul their methods, with Nick Sparrow, of ICM, leading the way with instant research into the causes of the failure and experiments with new techniques. Bob Worcester, of MORI, was most defensive, but MORI has also changed its methods.

polls' error in 1992, although no were more likely to turn out last say they voted in 1992.

ooe can say how important each ooe was. One has definitely been solved; the other three have been tackled in various ways, but no one will know until 2 May how successful these changes have been.

1.Out-of-date census-type in-

formation. All polls adjust their findings to make up for the fact that they have interviewed too few men, too many pensioners. too few rich people, and so on. This is called weighting. In electorate was more working class than it actually was. NOP's unweighted figures, for example, were more accurate than the figures they published. 2. Late swing. Some voters changed their minds in the last few days last time, or oo electioo day. The main movements were from Labour to Liberal

polling day, to people they have already interviewed to check if they have switched, which will It is now generally agreed that give clues to any late swing. In our poll today, Labour has there were four causes of the 3. Stay-at-homes. Tory voters a one-point lead in how people

time: a factor hard to separate from a late swing. All the poll-sters can do this time is ask people how certain they are to vote, although all the evidence is that it is the Tory vote, rather than Labour's, that is "soft". Our poll today finds 62 per ceot of Labour voters "certain to vote" against 48 per cent of Torics and 35 per cent of Lib Dems.

4. Shy Tories. This is the really tricky problem: in 1992, Tury voters suddenly did not want to take part in opinion polls or, if they did, tell pollsters how they would vote. We might guess that, with Margaret Thatcher gone, there was no counterbalance to the fact that Tory voting had come to be the Tories now breaking records for unpopularity, it is assumed that this "conspiracy of silence" still exists.

It is difficult to adjust for this, especially for those who refuse to take part in opinion polls. But the evidence from large random surveys conducted over long periods is that roughly equal Democrats, and from Lib Dems
to Tories. This time all polisiers
are likely to call head on the are likely to call back on the last general election (people telephooe, the day before tend to revise their memories according to their present views). This might be a way of check-

ing the reliability of polls.
In our poll today, Labour has

With a TSB fixed rate mortgage you won't have to worry who moves in.

The uncertainty around election time can lead to changing interest rates, which means the amount you pay on your mortgage each month can become unpredictable.

Taking out a TSB fixed rate mortgage guarantees that your monthly interest payments remain constant, making it easier for you to plan your budget.

Call TSB PhoneBank free on the number below or call into your local branch for a quotation.

And give yourself some peace of mind for the unforseeable future.

CALL FREE 0500 758 000

Mortgages



to status. Not available in the Channel letends. Whiten quotations are available on request by calling 0500 758 000, Calls may be recorded and manifored. TSB Bank pic and ant Authorsty only for TSB life insurance, pensions, unit trusts and TSB Bank Scotland pic are representatives of the TSB Marketing Group which is regulated by the Personal Inve orts of the TSB Marketing Group. TSB Bank plc. Victoria Ho

ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOANS SECURED ON IT.

Lib Dems make youth crime vow

Chief Political Correspondent

Competition to be tough on crime hetweeo Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, and Jack Straw, his Labour shadow, was condemned as "obscene" by Alex Carlile, the Liberal Democrat spokesman oo home affairs.

"It's no more than a sort of spot the ball-and-chain competition," Mr Carlile, who is

standing down at the election, prevention is the way to keep said oo BBC radio. His remarks could mark a serious rift with Labour on its promised crackdown on law and order, if

Labour wins the election. of "demonising a generation" by failing to come up with suitable youth crime prevention policies and putting too many young people behind bars inappro-priately. You see evidence

prison numbers down, not locking up more people in prisons. The evidence that prison works as a way of preventing people abour wins the election.

He accused the other parties doesn't exist," Mr. Carille said.

His party promised to tackle youth crime by expanding community sentencing and establishing targeted preventioo schemes from an early age; and to stop the diversion of time and time again that crime money from crime prevention increasing conviction rates.

to prison building under the Crime and Sentencing Bill.

Victims would be given a new deal uoder Liberal Democrat plans to introduce a restorative approach to justice, in some cases requiring offenders to compensate for the damage caused to their victims. The party's manifesto will pledge a review of sentencing. Money would be diverted from jails to concertrate on preventing crime and

nitely a

DELL DIMENSION PI66

- INTEL 166MHz PENTIUM* PROCESSOR
- 16MB SDRAM
- 15 COLOUR SYGA MONITOR (13.75 VIEWABLE AREA)
- 5 t 2Kb PIPELINE BURST CACHE
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- INTEGRATED 64 BIT PCI LOCAL BUS VIDEO + IMB VIDEO MEMORY

MICROSOFT* WINDOWS 95





P155v Power Platform. It comes with the awasome Intel 166MHz Femium

Some of our competitors claim to be offering better deals than us. But when it comes to offering so much for little, no one can catch us. Take the Dell Dimension™

pentium Processor and a price tag of only £899 (£1.085.70 inc delivery and VAT). And just

to prove a point, it also includes a large 26b Hard Drive and a 15" monitor (13.75" vis). All in all. a

better deal than anything put up by our competitors.

Call us today on 01344 724 693 and talk to the world's largest direct PC manufacturer.*

Dell and the Dell logs are registered trademarks and Dell Demension is a trademark of Dell Computer Corporation. His crossift is a registered trademarks of Little Corporation. His process of the Processional 95 are registered trademarks and Dell Demension is a trademark of Dell Computer Corporation. His process of the P

Tories tried to water down nursery vouchers report

Political Correspondent

action to water down the damaging findings of a Parliamenwhich was leaked to the Inde-

pendent, it emerged last night. Details of how Tories on the the voucher scheme the only rather than helping them. House of Commons committee tried to wipe out every one of its most damaging conclusions emerged as the Prime Minister condemned the leak and as an inquiry was launched into how Education Correspondent

The six Labour and Liberal A private day nursery is threat-Democrat MPs on the committee united to push its report Council to court to loosen through, while two Conservatives voted against it and four abstained. The report, which said the Prime Minister's flagship voucher scheme would be

to close, is due to be published way to get a free nursery place Graham Riddick, Conservance week. Graham Riddick, Conservance would be to send your child to tive MP for Colne Valley.

report." The voucher scheme had increased choice for par-

Mr Major said vesterday that a state school," he said.

supported by Conservatives on the Education and Employ He tabled amendments to its tary inquiry on nursery vouchers ents, he claimed. "Parents have ment Select Committee was in choice specifically because of . fact that the scheme squeezed the voucher scheme. Without private and voluntary providers troduced congratulatory state-

fought a losing hattle to remove Conservative MPs fought a fierce, unsuccessful rearguard should have chosen to leak the that one of the few criticisms the committee finalised its

draft report which would have removed key criticisms and inments. Instead of saying the

increased places, it would have welcomed the fact that it had "resulted in places for pre-fives in educational settings." On the quality of nursery lessons, Mr Riddick wanted to

تعكدًا من الأصل

add that Ofsted reports gave "significant grounds for optimism" despite the fact that most children would be in reception classes which might not provide proper nursery cducatioo. He also waoted to delete criticisms of poor English in Ofsted's inspection reports and of the "considerable amount of work" which would be placed oo teachers.

Last night, the Conservative chairman of the committee, Sir Malcolm Thornton, said the committee was split over the report, and that he had used his chairman's casting vote twice during Wednesday's meeting once against Labour and ooce against the Conservatives.



Hard to swallow: Tories demanded praise for the nursery scheme Photograph: Bnan Hams

Staff-pupil ratios hit private sector

ening to take Norfolk County

tough restrictions on staffing ratios to help it compete with

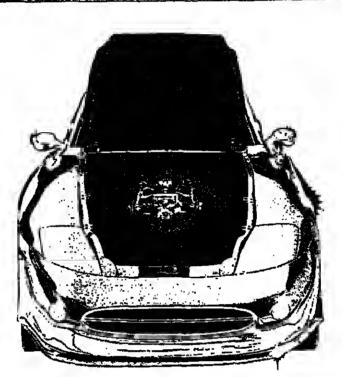
The move by Rambow Daycare nursery at North Walsham unlikely to raise standards or in- in Norfolk - one of four pilot crease pareotal choice and that authorities for vouchers - will it might force private nurseries further embarrass the Govern-

Private ourseries were among

those expected to benefit from the vouchers, yet Rainbow claims it is losing out as schools "hoover up" four-year-olds. Its grievance, which it intends to take to the High Court, centres on a difference in the legal demands oo private ourseries compared with schools over choseo school at five.

ment a day after the scheme was ratios of staff to children. While criticised by the Tory-led Edu-cation and Employment Select Committee. nurscries are obliged to allow no more than eight children to each adult, schools are exempt.

Most local authorities have chaoged primary admissions policies to admit four-year-olds to reception classes, where the pupil-teacher ratio may he as high as 30:1. Parents are opting for schools over nurseries out of fear that their child could otherwise be denied a place at their



an VOU run your business many times more efficiently?

Answer: manage it like a smaller company, where people share a single vision, work as a close

team and can adapt quickly. Now you can SIRORO TO FORVE

that degree of collaboration, with Lotus Notes and Domino. They form the basis of an intranet for

, giving everybody instant, secure access

to all the information they need. Using an intranet, your people will be able to work as a

tighter, more flexible team, keeping your organisation

full speed. The results can be surprising. (One of our customers found that as little as

a fifth of 15 operations were efficient.) Also, by adding IBM's

expertise you can make your human and enterprise resources more productive. Could an

intranet from IBM seriously boost your company's

like more information please call 0800 675 675 quoting INCR1.

Solutions for a small planet

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS



Eleir bad given the Prime Minister notice that he would be asking from bright by being tithene to the victims of the Doubland prime year ago. The exchange was not airprocesson on which the

Nursery vouctions (Depart Chickey, LB - Easteigh) North-west Keint (Bob Durin, C. Danford) Central Government control of non-domestic rates Control Government Country of non-content rates them seems wood)

The European Movement Six George Bagglast Reference With No. 1. The Lockerhie bonding Trans Dalyeri, Land Tantingson).

BLAIR'S QUESTION

Will the Prime Minister join with me it implements that it is a year day since the terrible events to Eurobiased. We renterate the little one died, we greeve with their periods end with their pried is and they uniffect in the mentory of this value. If it may be in the period in the mentory of this value. If it may be increased in the period below that will ever forget the scene that we saw their. The said. The is entire will ever forget the scene that we saw their the benevity and for the community of Durnhams. I are said the the period only if the period of the community of Durnhams. I are said that the thoughts into only in this but of the entire nations are with their haday.

me w

THE CREEP OF THE DAY

Thatcher's aides deny faith in Blair

Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Baroness Thatcher's office last

night tried to scotch reports that she privately believed Britain would be sale in the hands of the Labour leader, Tony Blair.

Lady Thatcher's reported remarks threatened to undermine the Tory campaign warning of "New Labour, New

AA JOH NOW FROM

Blair with demonic eyes. A spokeswoman for Lady Thatcher said she had no knowledge of the remarks, reported in a diary item in The Times at the weekend by Peter Stothard, the editor. Mr Stothard, who declined to

comment, described an evening

in clubland in January in which an unnamed worried Tory from

Gloucestershire had asked what sort of prime minister Mr Blair Mr Stothard quoted "avery se-nior Tory" replying: "Tony Blair is a man who won't let Britain

Tribime, the left-wing news paper, today names the source as Baroness Thatcher

But 24 hours after angrily denying Lady Thatcher was acting for Michael Portillo's leadership attempt to replace John Major, her office was forced to dismiss the Blair re-

Vote Tactically X for the candidate best able to beat the Tory

For more information on how to Get Rid Of Them phone us now on 0171-833 5801

(24 hr answerphone) or write to GROT, 6 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF

the anti-Tory tactical voting campaign



Finger food: Matt McLaughlin, head rider of the Lippanzer Horse Troupe, from Florida, rewards mount Conversano Clyde after rehearsals for last night's show at Wembley Arena, the opening venue for a nationwide tour

Judge sounds last post for forces' gay ban

Patricia Wynn Davies Legal Affairs Editor

A key blow was struck against the Government's ban on gays in the military yesterday after a High Court judge sent the most critical challenge yet to the European Court of Justice.

A ruling in favour of a sacked naval medical assistant, Terry Perkins, who claims Britain is breaking the EU Equal Treatment Directive, would mean the scrapping of the policy and could pave the way for a mulhill for the Ministry of Defence for the thousands of homosexuals discharged from the forces over the past 20 years.

Such a ruling would also force the Government to

change the law covering the private sector, creating the right for gays not to be discriminated

against in employment. In the wake of a recent European judgment giving trans-sexuals protection from discrimination at work, Mr Justice Lightman said the prospects of the Luxembourg court upholding Mr Perkins complaint were "significant" and sufficient to justify a

reference to Europe. Mr Perkins, 28, was discharged in October 1995 after nearly five years exemplary service following a tip-off to the Royal Navy's special investigations branch, and is among the 100-plus homosexuals believed to be sacked because of their sexuality each year. Following service at sea he trained with the Royal Marines and gained early promotion. He now lives with his partner in Nottingham.

Mr Perkins, now a technical services consultant, praised the judge's "brilliant' ruling, adding: "I have a lot of friends in the Royal Navy who don't have a problem with it at all. I have had no negative feedback whatsoever.

In yesterday's judgment, Mr. Justice Lightman said: "Homosexual orientation is a reality today which the law must recognise and adjust to ... there the European Court will take the further courageous step to extend protection to those of homosexual orientation, if a courageous step is necessary to do so." A ruling is expected in

about 18 months. Duncan Lustig-Prean, 37, one of four sacked gay service personnel whose cases are pending before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, said: "I am delighted we have opened our second legal battlefront in Europe and that the judge has so clearly expressed the view that the blanket ban is likely to be considered unlawful." Nicholas Soames, the Armed

Forces Minister, said: "the Government supports the armed forces in their wish to maintain [the] ban. Homosexuality is not compatible with the trust that must exist between comrades in arms ... I fear that Labour, if elected, would give up the

The MoD said it might argue that the ban on gays was "purely for the reason of combative effectiveness and incompati-bility and that such key defence decisions are outside the scope of the EU treaty from which the directive derives and also outside the scope of the European Court of Justice."

Leading article, page 17

É

WHY NOT GIVE YOUR HOME A FACELIFT THIS EASTER?

DULUX Coloured Emulsion Matt, Silk or Soft Sheen Choice of colours 2.5 litres Was £11-99 Save £2

CROWN

ADVANCE

Clear Varnish. Matt. Gloss or Satin 500ml Was £6-59 Save 70p

RONSEAL

CROWN

2.5 litres

Save £3

HOMEBASE

All Purpose Ceramic

Was £11-49 Save £1-50

Wall Tile Adhesive

& Grout 6-9kg

BOSCH

PTL 1

Wallpaper

Was £39-99

Stripper

Save £10

Was £14-99

Advance Emulsion

Choice of colours

Ports of Call Wallpaper Was £7-97 Save £1 (Also available Jeff Banks co-ordinating Border Was £5-99 Now £4-99 Save £1)

COLOURMATCH Fireside Plain Ceramic Wall Tiles Pack of 18 Was £8-47 Save £2-60

£5-89

MASKING TAPE mmyl x mc Was £1-35 Save 36p

> POLYCELL Liquid Advance

Was £4-47 Save 50p £3.99

£1 CASH BACK see leafle!

GAZELLE

Ladder

4 Tread Step

Was £21-99

Save £6-60

£15.39

HOME & CONTENTS INSURANCE FOR A FREE INSURANCE QUOTE FREEPHONE 0800 397 397

CROWN Vive La Couleur Wallpaper (Also available Crown Vive La Couleur co-ordinating Border Special Purchase 93-99)

HOMEBASE

Medium Fill

Brush Set Pack of 5

Was £9-69 Save £1-70

SAVE £20 OFF CO-ORDINATING CURTAINS

SAINSBURY'S HOUSE & GARDEN CENTRES

MDNDAY-THURSDAY 8AM - 8PM . FRIDAY 8AM - 9PM . SATURDAY 8AM - 8PM . SUNDAY 10AM - 4PM: se subject to availability. Products and offers may vary in Northern Ireland and Eire "Stores in Sculland open Sunday Pam-Spm Opening Limes.

DAILY POEM

My Hands

By Tariq Latif

All day I have wiped paste inks From auxiliary rollers, ink ducts, Rubber stamps and the work top; dabbing My fingers in trichloroethane,

The cleaning solution is clear as water And smells like methylated spirits. My fingers are numb. When I squeeze them They tingle, letting loose

Tiny electric bolts. The top part Of the fingerprints are grained with inks. My fingers are like lighthouses Granulating under a storm of acids.

Fissures straddle across them. Some cuts run deep as valleys. The air In them is loaded with missile-shaped atoms That bembard the surface.

Dust phunes up. I shed flesh flakes. My hands are ageing, faster Than the rest of me; look They are like two finished pages of a diary.

"My Hands" comes from Tariq Latif's second collection, The Minister's Garden (Arc Publications, £6.95). Born in Lahore, the poet moved to Manchester in 1970, graduated in physics at Sheffield University and now runs a labelling business. The Minister's Garden is distributed by Password Books Ltd, 23 New Mount Street, Manchester, M4 4DE.



VODAFDNE -TARIFF INCLUDES 15 HINRITES OF CALLS

PER MONTH WORTH UP TO 272 PER YEAR INCLUDING PEAK CALLS FREE LEATHER CARRY CASE
AND IN-CAR ADAPTOR WORTH £55 Inc. VAT

FREE COUNTDOWN MEMBERSH FOR 1 YEAR WITH THE CELLPHONES DIRECT ADVANTAGE CARD FREE WARRANTY

FREE 14-DAY MONEY BACK FREE DELIVERY IN 4 WORKING

We'll make any collectly american over for this phone. YODAFONL . PERSONALWORLD IS TAKIFF COMMECTE CHARGE £35.80

MONTRY RENTH £17.50 PENERIFE CHILS IN VIDE OF PENERILS 40p per min 12p per min ONE SECOND NELLING

NOKIA 1611 £9.99

NOKIA

@ C C A

1. .2 3 3 F

51 5

Ton 800 (900)

OF THE

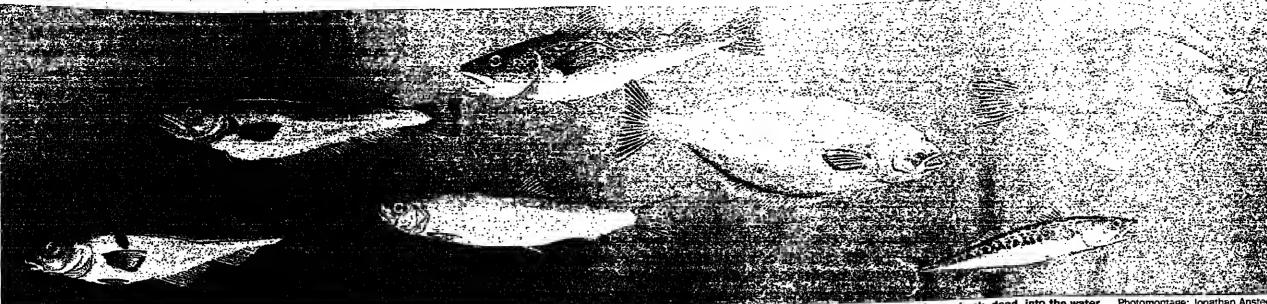
00

0

Cellphones

FREEPHONE 0800 000 888





المكذا من الأصل

Fish out of water: (Top from left) Whiting, cod, plaice; (bottom) haddock, herring, halibut and mackerel - all are at risk of over-fishing in the North Sea where they may be thrown back, dead, into the water

Plenty more fish in the sea? Not any longer

Nicholas Schoon

Half the catch of cod and haddock from the North Sea is thrown hack overboard, dead, environment and fisheries ministers from nine nations bor-dering the beavily over-fished sea were told yesterday.

The ministers, with two very different sets of responsibilities, are meeting at international level for the first time in an attempt to change forever the polities and diplomacy of fishing. That, at least, is the stated goal of some, including the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer.

Discarding over-quota fish The quota system also leads to isn't unfortunate or silly, but vast quantities of fish being discarded because they are beble," he told his fellow ministers low the minimum legal landing

pean Union states; the EU's common fisheries policy had failed. "We spend so much time sharing out the stocks that we baven't found a way of increasing them," he said. Some of the estimates for stocks allocated among the nations were "invented, paper fish" which did

not exist in reality.

Cod is the most endangered large stock. But fisheries ministers have failed, year after year, to introduce curbs and tough quotas which lift the risk of stock collapse for many species

Lobbying by fishermen and their MPs leads to quotas being set which are ofteo well above the recommended safety levels. from Norway and other Euro- size or because boats bave al-

ready caught their allowance of the species.

The ministers were told yesterday that, by weight, 22 per cent of cod and 36 per cent of haddock were discarded. But the number of fish thrown back is put at 51 and 49 per cent respectively.

The joint declaration which limits on quotas. The declaration ends today, cannot change anything directly because the North thing directly because the North the ministers will sign today aims to put North Sea fishing on a sustainable basis. It should also begin a new process of setting maximum annual catches and minimum safe-stock levels which would impose much tougher

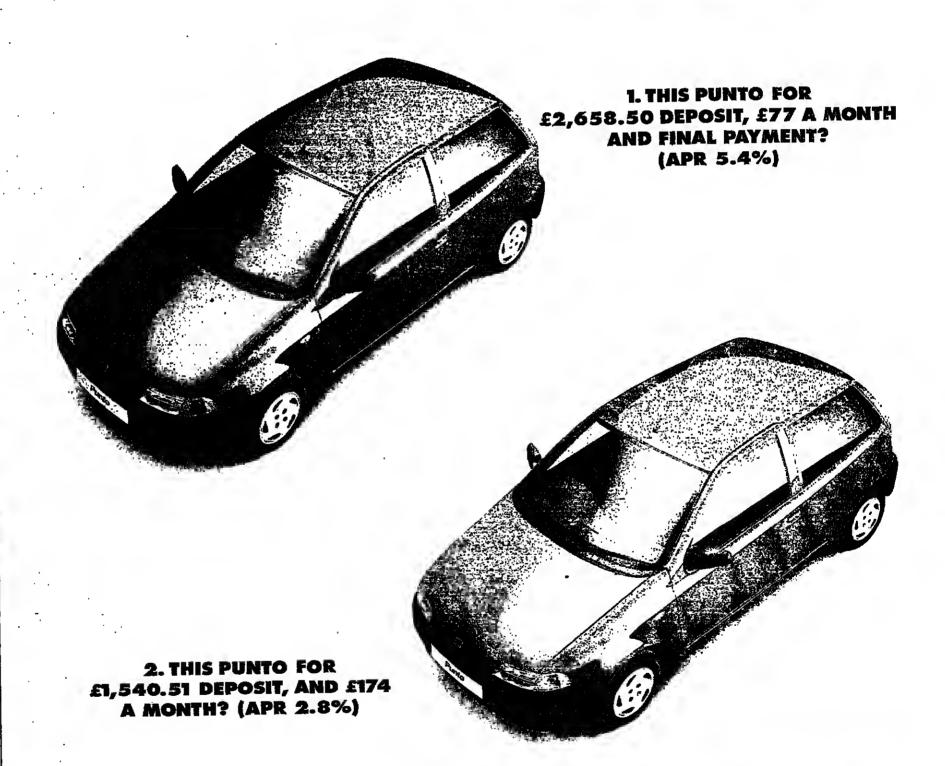
its, as yet undecided, to be set within two years for 11 of the most important stocks, including cod, plaice, berring, mackerel, haddock and sand ecl.

Sea conference process, of which it is part, does not make fishing law and policy. That is the domain of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, the Norwegian The Bergen meeting, which government, and whatever the acquaintance with Norway's

ular negotiations. But the final ministerial declaration ought to give a strong political direction towards reforming the policy. For Mr Gummer, vesterday brought the chance to renew his

plain-speaking Environment Minister, Thorbjoern Berntsen. the conference chairman. A few years ago he declared Mr Gummer "a shit-bag" when they disagreed about whaling. In Bergen yesterday Mr Gum-

WHICH PUNTO WOULD YOU PREFER?



McAliskey can keep baby in jail

Patricia Wyna Davies

The pregnant terrorism sus-pect, Roisin McAliskey, will be base in Osnabrück last sur She denies involvement. allowed to keep her baby with her in Holloway jail when it is born, the Prison Service decid-

operations, took the decision pregnancy.

The detention of Ms after a review of medical reports by the panel of welfare and McAliskey, daughter of the for-health representatives yesterday mer nationalist MP Bernadette morning. "I have agreed with the views of the expert panel that it would be in the child's best interests for them both to he located in the mother-andbaby unit," he said.

McAliskey, 25, who is seven not be restrained while she is there. Her mother said she was egory A prisoner to have a baby in prison. It comes amid controversy over her four-month detentioo, without charge or conviction, while Germany seeks to extradite ber in con-

bomb attack oo a British Army base in Osnabrück last summer.

Following the recent reductioo in Ms McAliskey's securi-ty categorisation from high-risk ed yesterday following a recommeodatioo by an expert will be able to attend ante-panel. The standard-risk Category A, she ommeodation by an expert will be able to attend ante-panel. Alan Walker, director of don jail in the final weeks of her

paign for her to be granted bail because of ber condition. Her lawyers will make a fresb bail application today.

Ms McAliskey will give birth The move will make Ms in an outside bospital and will delighted with the decision adding: "Now we have ensured that mother and baby stay together, the next step is to ensure that mother and baby are together outside jail."

The COPERATIVE BANK

Lowest rate, no fee.



TRANSFER YOUR BALANCE FOR

LIK's lowest balance transfer rate - No annual fee for life . Think what you could save . New card purchases 21.7% APR variable • Keep your credit limit - No need to bank with us - Limited offer - Lines open 24 hours, 7 days a week • Call now.

TO A CREDIT REPORTED AMONG FOR CREDIT ASSESSMENT A COPY OF THE BIOLINE HAY BE RETARRED THE RESIDENCE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY HAVE APRELED TO BANK VISA CARD & TELES APRELED THE FEBRUARY HAVE THE PROPERTY HAVE APRELED TO BE APRELED TO THE PROPERTY HAVE APPEAR APPEA MYPRONTS ALL IS OF YOUR OUTSTANDING BALANCE EACH MORTH - HERPLIN IS OR HOME IF YOU WISH

1. LOW MONTHLY PAYMENT APR 5.4% FIAT EASIPLAN EXAMPLE PUNTO 55S 3DR

Cash Price! (on the road)	27,627.38	35 Monthly Payments	£77.00
Deposit	£2,658.50	Final Payment* (inc £25 option fee)	£2,768.86
Amount Financed	£4,968.88	APR	5.4%
Period	37 Months	Total Charge for credit	£636.98
First Payment (inc £65 admin fee)	£142.00	Total Amount Payable	£8,264.36

Would you like a Fiat Punto that offers an omazing combination of style, practicality and sheer originality? One that's designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro and was voted European Car of the Year 1995?

Or would you prefer a Punto with safety features like side impact bars and seat belt pretensioners as standard? All fitted into an

2. LOW DEPOSIT APR 2.8% HIRE PURCHASE EXAMPLE PUNTO 555 3DR

Cash Pricet (on the road)	£7,627.38	34 Monthly Payments	£174.00	
Deposit	£1,540.51	Final Payment (inc £25 option fee)	£199.00	
Amount Financed	£6,086.87	APR	2.8%	
Period	36 Months	Total Chargo for credit	£267.13	
First Payment (inc £65 admin fee)	£239.00	Total Amount Payable	£7,894.51	

incredibly compact body that feels anything but small inside.

No contest. These Puntos are identical, they can both give you all of these things. The only difference is how you pay.

Visit your local dealer or call 0800 71 7000 or http://www. fiat.com on the Internet for more information.

CARS SHOWN RAT PUNITO 555 3DR AT CRAZUS ON THE ROAD, TRIZE INCLUDES 25% FOR DELVERY TO DEALER, NUMBER PLATES, AT AND IN MEXIT'S PLAND UPENIES. HE CONSIST OF THE OF GOING TO FREE 1337, CAFE DIES 715.77 YEART TO THE VERY TO THE OF GOING TO THE ROAD, TRIZE INCLUDES 25% FOR DELVERY TO DEALE AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE ADDRESS O

DRIVEN BY PASSION





Forget the rumours about Ken. Billy, the gay doll with all his parts, takes the market by storm



Out of the closet: Billy, the world's first proud to be gay doll - and anatomically correct in every detail - modelling a range of outfl

TOP BRAND VIDEOS-

Kate Watson-Smyth

For years there were rumours about Barbie's boyfriend, Ken, and everybody wondered whether GI Joe would come out of the closet. But now those hets are off – there is a oew boy in

*INTEREST FREE OPTION

copurt a exercit free of repaid in full before for with the first, this, Cith or 10th mo symmet according to the Option Period indicated on the relatest conduct

His name is Billy and he is the world's first out and proud gay doll, anathmically correct in every detail. Tall and blond with biceps and boxers bulging, Billy is taking America by storm.

The 13in tall doll, whose per-

The 13in tall doll, whose penis measures 1.5 inches, was launched at the New York

Dead, who designed Billy, is delighted.

"I was always sure he would

be 100 per eent successful ness out of the ghetto, but we because he is the first gay product that can be sold over-the-counter instead of under it. he are trying to put out a message

Mr MeKitterick, who is gay, insisted that Billy is a responsible adult who has a message to convey. "We are taking gay-

ness out of the ghetto, hut we are not saying that every gay man should look like this. We are trying to put out a message about individuality and persuading people that it is OK to be gay, to be different," he said.

"The point is that you should Billy began life as a two-dimensional drawing who modelled Mr McKitterick's designs, but the idea of making him 3D gradually took hold as he acquired a personality.

For the record, he is from Amsterdam, advocates peace,

Amsterdam, advocates peace, understanding and safe sex and he has his own condoms – Japanese finger coodoms are a perfect fit.

However, for the time being Billy, who retails at \$49.95 (£30), will only be sold in the United States.

United States.
"It is not that the British are not ready for him, just that he was launched in America and he has done so well that we are trying to coment that," Mr McKitterick said. "When the time is right be will be sold in England."
Mr McKitterick is currently

working on a "frieod" for Billy, but his identity is a closely guarded secret.

"Billy is gay because I am gay, if I was a transvestite ... who

knows," he said.

In the meantime, not to be outdone by his female counterparts, Billy has a range of simply gorgeous outfits. There is Wall Street Banker Billy, sailor Billy, cowboy Billy, Master Billy (very ruhber and studs) and San Francisco Billy, who's just hanging out dude.

In two months' time Hollywood Billy will be on the scene, complete with shades and lycra

Mr McKitterick's dearest wish is to build Billy his very own apartmeot, where he can eotextain friends with the video from the song he has recorded. Move over Ken, you are

Repairs backlog threatens schools

Lucy Ward Education Correspondent

A ticking "timebomh" of crumhing schools will explode within three to five years because planned spending on repairs is being cancelled in favour of emergency patching and mending, local authority architects warned yesterday.

warned yesterday.

A survey of 70 councils from shires to cities revealed the shortfall—between the billions authorities say is needed to repair crumbling schools and the cash the Government permits them to spend—has hit a 20-year high. This year, councils say their allocation represents just a fifth of what they need.

The problem is worst in primary schools, where the gap between need and actual spending to repair crumbling roofs, replace leaking mobile classrooms and even clear dangerous asbestos has risen by 40 per cent in the last three years. In secondary schools, the shortfail

cent in the last three years. In secondary schools, the shortfall has increased by 25 per ceot.

The Society of Chief Architects in Local Authorities, which carried out the survey, said its research showed councils were cutting back oo planned repair projects such as new school roofs to release money for day-to-day maintenance work.

The society's boildings spokesman, Laurence Cooper, said delays to major schemes meant more money speot on patching np.

"Instead of having a new roof you start putting out the huckets, which ultimately means greater cost and more disruption in schools. We appear to be entering a downward spiral towards a crisis in the next three to five years."

Local education anthorities were told by the Department for Education and Employment in December that they would be allowed to borrow less than a

fifth of what they had asked for to spend on schools building and repairs in 1997-98. The total available is almost £700m, but councils had asked for £1.9bn to ease an estimated repairs and maintenance backlog of £3.2bn. Lancashire County Council is

Lancashire County Council is among the authorities forced to postpone major repair projects to find the cash for general maintenance.

mantenance.

The authority asked for permission to borrow £34.5m in 1997-98, but was granted approval for just over £5m. The cotire sum is allocated for speoding on new school places, leaving not a penny towards the £20m the council says is needed for repairs.

Ray Marriott, head of plan-

Ray Marriott, head of planning and community services, said the cash was needed to replace rotting and leaking Sixtiesbuilt school buildings.

place rotting and leaking Sixtiesbuilt school buildings.

He added: "It is simply that the whole fabric of buildings deteriorates yet at the rate of school replacement we have at the moment some of our schools are going to have to wait 700 years to be renewed."

schools are going to have to wait 700 years to be renewed."

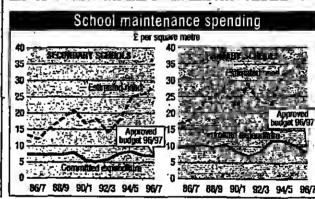
John Ryan, Labour education chairman of Bradford council, said the authority needed £200m to bring all its schools up to standard. However, the authority had woo approval for only an eighth of the £40m repairs money it asked for to replace 149 roofs and remove asbestos from 148 schools, among other projects.

among other projects.

David Whitbread, spokesman for the Association of County Councils, said most authorities saw their capital budgets eateo up on providing new school places and were unable to spend ademately on renairs.

adequately on repairs.

A spokeswoman for the DFEE said the upkeep of buildings was the local authorities responsibility. If they delayed, buildings would deteriorate and the final cost would increase.





NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL (ISLE OF MAN) LIMITED.

Halifax International (Isle of Man) Limited, announces certain revised interest rates from 17th March 1997.

BALANCE	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS P.A.	MONTHLY INTEREST GROSS P.A.
HALIF	AX INTERNATIONAL C	OLD 90
£100,000+	6.40%	6.22%
£50,000+	6.30%	6.13%
£25,000+	6.05%	5.89%
£10,000+	5.45%	5.32%
HALI	FAX INTERNATIONAL	GOLD
£100,000+	6.05%	5.89%
£50,000+	5.80%	5.65%
£25,000+	5.70%	5.56%
£10,000+	5.15%	5.03%
£5,000+	4.50%	4.41%
£500+	£500+ 3.25% 3.209	

If you have less than £10,000 in your Halifax International Gold 90 account it will earn interest at the equivalent Halifax International Gold rate. If you have less than £500 in your Halifax International Gold 90 or Halifax International Gold account we will only pay interest at 1.00% gross p.a. "Gross" means we will not take any tax off the interest we pay. The accounts shown above are not available to residents of the Isle of Man.

Further details can be obtained by calling Halifax International (Isle of Man) Limited on 01624 612323 (from within the UK) or 44 1624 612323 (from outside the UK).



HALFAX INTERNATIONAL ISLE OF HAN LINETED IS RECEITED WITH THE ISLE OF HAN FINANCIAL.

SUPERVISION COMMESSION FOR BANKING AND INVESTMENT BUSINESS, BRANCH AND REGISTERED OFFICE, PO BOX 75, AD STRAND STREET, DOUG

Afghans hope for peace in the pipeline

Christopher Bellamy Defence Correspondent

Two massive new pipelines are being planned to carry natural gas through the emhattled territory of Afghanistan, from Turkmenistan in Central Asia to Pakistan and India.

Although Afghanistan is still regarded as unstable, two corporations - one from the United States and one from Argentina - have tabled plans to build pipelines to carry bil-lions of cubic metres of gas from the ex-Soviet republic to south-

If one or both of the companies succeed, it will be the first large-scale private investment by the West in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion in

The plans follow the discovery of a colossal deposit of 750 billion cubic metres of natural gas at Yashlar in Turkmenistan. Besides the potential commercial advantages to anyone with the courage to invest, western diplomats see the pipeline plan as a way of stabilising Aighanistan and the entire Central Asia region.

One pipeline is proposed by the Bridas Corporation, an oil and gas company which has an Argentinian director, and is hased in the British Virgin is-



lands. The other is proposed by the American Unocal Corporation, teamed with the Delta Oil Company of Saudi Arabia.

Both propose four-foot diameter pipes, 800 miles long cross-ing Afghanistan and avoiding

At present, the two corporapursuing two separate legal ac-Unocal, for its "torthous inter-" into, India: It will require six

or that of its neighbours - can be exploited, the country could enter a period of stability Photograph: AP ference" in a plan to export the compressor stations to keep Yashlar gas to Pakistan. Bridas the gas flowing, and will cost \$2.5bn. The Unocal proposal set up a joint venture with

m Afghanisian - something ansion to northern India costing \$600m. Both proposals plan to send up to 20 billion cubic metres of gas a year. The final decision to proceed will depend on a lasting peace

ticipated by the two corporations. The West has a strategic interest in exploiting the oil and gas resources of the area. If Afghanistan, which has been at

war for Myears, is to become stable, diplomatic sources said yesterday, a dollar-carner - oil and gas - or a pipeline carrying them - will help.

view of South Asian security. If tndia and Pakistan, with their vast and growing populations. are dependent on each other for access to the oil and gas deposits of Central Asia, they are less

likely to attack each other - as they have done in the past, Military planners believe a major war between India and Pakistan might be the most likely seenario for a future nuclear conflict.

Turkmenistan's Minister for Industry and Mineral resources, Gochmurad Nazdzhanov, said on Tuesday that his country had 6.5 billion tonnes of oil and 21 tum billion cubic metres (more than 20 times the Yashfor pocket) of gas. He said his government had taken "concrete steps" in attract invest-ment in the oil and gas sector.

Until now, experts have been sceptical about the prospect of exploiting oil and gas in Alghanistan, or taking Central Asian oil and gas out through it, because of the cost and the area's instability. US prospectors found small quantities of oil and gas in Afghanistan in the 1930s, but the natural route out was always seen as to the west, via the Caspian Sea, However, potential instability in Russia, along with increasing energy demands in India and Pakistan. have altered the nicture.



the most rugged mountains:

Turkmenistan to develop Yashenvisages a similar pipeline. lar in 1992. But in 1995, Tirkending nearby at Multan, at a menistan granted Unocal rights cost of \$1.9bn with the extento set up a consortium to build a pipeline from the Turkmen-

an border to Multan. Malcolm Hurlston, representing Bridas and speaking from Ashkhahad in Turkmenistan, said that in February 1996 Bridas had signed an exclusive agreement to build the pipeline with the Taleban, the Islamic group then controlling large parts of the south of the

"This year, Bridas has visited all the different parties in Afghanistan and has confirmed the agreements with them to go forward with the project without waiting for the end of hostilities," he said.

Last month, Bridge also won a deal to upgrade the existing gas pipeline system in Kaza-khstan, which forms part of the former Soviet network and carries Turkmen gas to Russia and on to Western Europe.

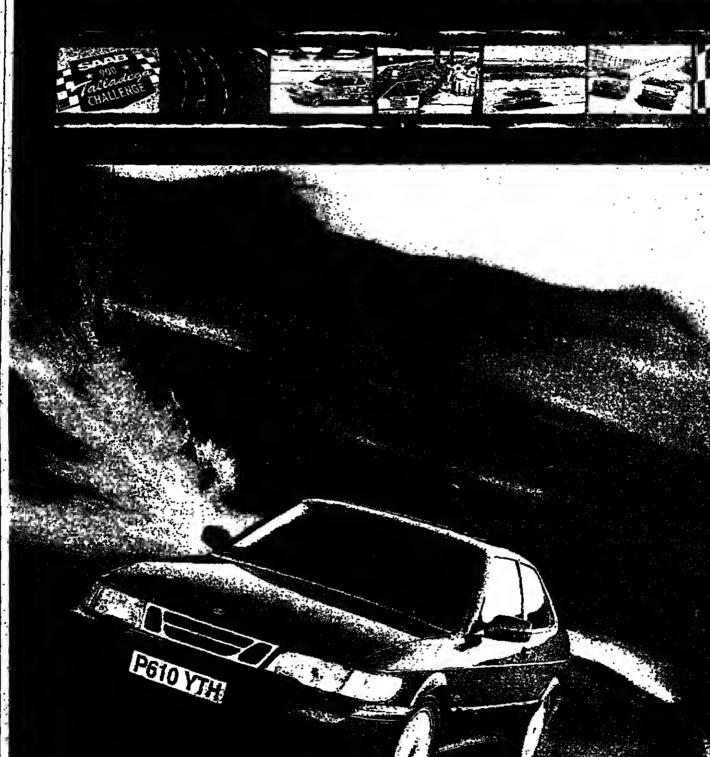
Yesterday, Mr Hurlston said he had been in negotiation with all three warring factions in Afghanistan, although the route civisaged passes through the area controlled by the Taleban, which now controls Kabul and most of Afghanistan.

The Bridgs pipeline is planned to run from Mary in tions are in dispute. Bridas is Turkmenistan through west and south Afghanistan to Sui in tions - one against Turk- Pakistan, from where it is boped menistant and one against it will link with existing pipelines

Cult hero who

fritters away

state's wealth



ens of

ROMA

Niyazov of Turkmenistan just With the average person's about takes the biscuit. Every monthly income hovering at in his desert nation has a picture

of the man who is known to his people as "Turkmenhashi" (leader of all the Turkmen). "May my tongue shrivel up and my bones turn to ashes if I betray my country or my pres-ident, chant Turkmen children every morning. In Ashgabat, the capital, a statue of Mr Nivazov's mother nursing the president as a child de- Transcaucasian states. picts him as a Christ-like figure.

state in history, Mr Nivazov has established a personality cult as huge as those of Stalin and Mao Ise-tung. Towns, mosques and roads are named after the man who, according to his critics, is frittering away Turk-menistan's gas and oil wealth in an orgy of corruption and

extravagant spending.

Avdy Kniiyev, a former Turk-men foreign minister who broke with the president in 1992, said: "Nivazov has begun to lead the people back into the Middle Ages. Beginning in 1991. when we achieved independence, we began to slip back from the level of development that we attained under Russian hegemony to the 19th century or possibly even the 18th."

Mr Kuliyev told the magazine Transition: "Niyazov was counting on the country being able to Anti-Russian feeling has survive on the proceeds of our oil and gas, which would generate enough wealth that everyone would have a Mercedes, no. one would have to work, and the population would lie around drinking tea and thinking of nothing ... There is only one way out by getting rid of this leader and this government."

According to the US-based .

human rights group Freedom House, which ranks the per-In a region with a rich tradition formances of all the world's governments, Turkmenistan last of luxury-loving, self-glorifying year was one of the 17 most re-despots, President Saparmurad pressive countries on earth. Niyazov of Thrkmenistan just With the average person's newspaper, every billboard, £10 or less and annual inflation every banknote and every office of more than 300 per cent, in his desert nation has a picture most of its 4.5 million people do not even have the consolation of enjoying energy-derived personal wealth.

Since independence, Turkmenistan's development has been held back by two fundamental problems. One is its reliance on Russia to transport its gas - its main export - to the markets of Ukraine and the

The other is that these coun-As Communist Party leader tries are so poor that they have before the collapse of the run up debts to Turkmenistan of upon the first independent Turkmen to fill his treasury's coffers and start modernising his country, it is essential for Thekmenistan not only to collect its debts but to develop new markets. -

This is one of the main impulses behind the Turkmen drive to build a gas pipeline across Afghanistan to Pakistan. Another is the desire to loosen the grip which Russia currently maintains on Turkmen export

With prickly Uzbekistan turbulent Afghanistan and zealous Iran for neighbours, Mr Niyazov is not foolish enough to think that either he or his vulnerable country can survive without Russian blessing. How-ever, according to Mr Kuliyev, that has not prevented Mr Niyazov from occasionally playing the anti-Russian card in an ef-

beyond the

conventional

charted a course through Turkmenistan's history ever since Tsarist forces slaughtered thousands of Turkmen at the battle of Geok-tepe in 1881. While avoiding extremes, Mr Niyazov has made Turkmen the state language and stifled freedom country's 300,000-strong Russ25,000 miles flat out at 140mph. You'll never need to do it. But it's nice to know you can.

IF YOU'RE CONTEMPLATING TEST-DRIVING A SAAB 900, think about the one it's already had. We drove one around Alabama's Talladegan grunt for 8 days and nights, non-stop, flat out (that's 25,000 miles, 140mph). in the process we broke forty international longdistance records. The engine, despite our best efforts,

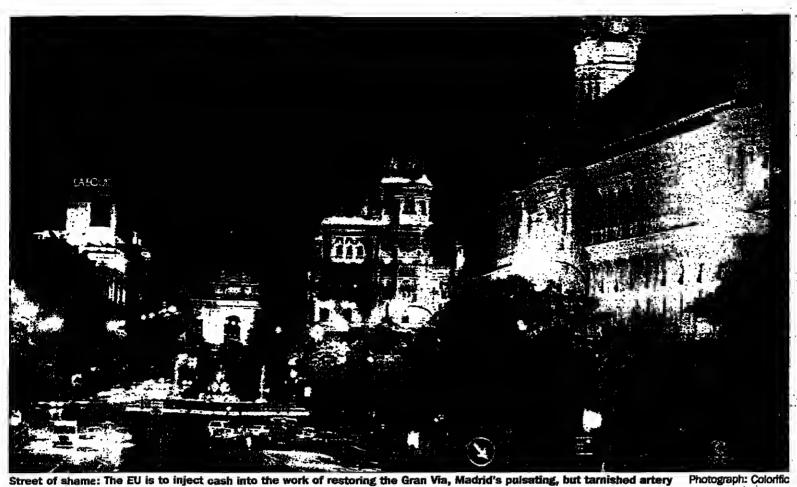
Clearly, it's nice to know that the Saab 900 possesses such power and endurance.

Better still, it's nice to know it's not beyond your means. On the road, a Saab 900 will cost you from £15.500", whilst contract hire for business users is from £199 a month. To arrange a test drive, phone 0800 626 556. And on the day, remember to observe the speed limit.

E199 PER MONTH PLUS INITIAL DEPOSIT. CONTRACT HIRE SCHEME TYPICAL EXAMPLE: SAAB 9001

TO SAAB INFORMATION CENTRE, FREEPOST WC4524, LONDON WC18 38F PLEASE SEND FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE SAAB 900 🔲 SAAB 9000 CD (SALDION) 🗓 5448 9000CS (SDS) 🗇 Name Address

*Car shown 9005 2 Or Talladegy Coupe Period of birer 48 months. Deposin (3 ene 52 Horston or section of 52 period of birer 48 months. Deposin (3 ene 52 Horston or section of 52 period of birer 48 months. Deposin (3 ene 52 Horston or section of 52 period of birer 48 months. Deposin (3 ene 52 Horston or section of 52 period of 53 period or 63 period or 63



HERE'S

Offer available until 22 March 1997. Also available at Sainsbury's Savacentres. Merchandise subject to availability. The law does not permit the sale of alcohol to persons under the age of 18.

The Guinness word and the Harp device are registered trans-marks. < Guinness Browing Worldwide 100

£24m facelift for grand boulevard that swapped style for sleaze

The Gran Via, the pulsating aorta of Madrid, a swaggering art deco, jazz age boulevard lined with some of Europe's finest baroque follies, earliest sky-scrapers and glitziest movie palaces, is to be "remodelled" with the help of European

wankiest thoroughfares in Europe. When it was built in 1910, 14 streets were scythed away to motor car. The Gran Via blossomed during the First World War, when neutral Madrid was

Brenan, the writer on Spain, found it in 1949.

This week, Madrid's city fa-thers described the Gran Via and 10 adjacent squares as "the most derelict and socially marginal areas in the city". They say prostitutes, drug dealers and "urban tribes" abound. They Once it was one of the reckon it will cost £24m to spruce the area up and have asked Brussels to go halves.

It is true that the Gran Via has seen better days, that on an evening stroll to the austere may glimpse a dazed prostitute peeing in a doorway. As you press in with the crowds to a film at one of the 1920s cinemas, as grand and kitsch as the set of a classic Hollywood musical, you may meet a drugged performance artist with a drugged cat on his shoulder, or an elderly man crouched beneath his blanket across the doorstep that he has appropriated every night for almost 20 years. Many regard the area north of Gran Via as

no-go area after dark. Crucial to the "remodelling" is a proposal to widen the pavements by nearly two metres each. side, which is fine for crushed pedestrians, but will compound jams. More worrying is a pro-

a magnet for every kind of prosperous activity. "Vulgar and blatant" was how Gerald theatres and 19 cinemas with suggesting the existence of 18 theatres and 19 cinemas within a few hundred yards of each be touched up, walkways cre-ated; special signs erected and street furniture renewed.

Let's hope they don't tear down the giant handpainted cinema posters. The Gran Via must be the last outpost of the Western world where this engaging art form survives. Nor should they tinker with the facade of Madrid's finest art deco building, the Capitol, built in 1932; or with Spain's first sky-scraper, the Telefonica building. by the metro station. Hailed as a modern triumph when it went where journalists went to file. and be censored, during the Spanish civil war.

At the far end of the street, Franco's even taller Edificio Espana, built between 1948 and 1953, is unlikely to be affected by the Town Hall's improvement plan. Its curious mock-Habsburg details have been lovingly restored by private developers. Prosperous youngsters are snapping up the smart modernised flats with their breathtaking views to the mountains, or down the main dragthe street's horrendous traffic the Gran Via - to the heart of



Paris shop blasted by hit-and-run bomber

A parcel bomb exploded in a shop in Paris, slightly injuring one person. A passer-by apparently threw the bomb into the home-decoration shop in the rue Monge, in the Latin Quarter. It bounced down the stairs into the storeroom in the cellar and exploded. A store employee, alone in the cellar room, was slightly four by the blast, which caused minor damage. The suspected bomber

Senators beg to differ

It would be a crime to beg aggressively, to relieve oneself in public and to lie down in doorways or on pavements in commercial districts under a bill passed by the New York state senate. Its sponsor, Guy Velella, a Republican, said the bill was aimed at many New Yorkers' quality-of-life concerns, and was not aimed at poor or homeless

Planes pound Tamil base

Sri Lankan forces launched air, naval and artillery attacks on a key base of the Tamil Tiger rebels in the jungles of the north-east. "Air force pilots have reported direct hits on targets," an official said. "Ground troops monitoring rebel radio transmissions say the rebels are asking for reinforcements."

Xinjiang attack reported

A Uighur exile group in Kazakhstan said Uighur separatists in China's turbulent north-west province of Xinjiang had carried out a bomb attack against a Chinese military installation. A spokesman said buildings were damaged but did not know whether there were any casualties. He said his own organisation was not responsible for the attack.

Bride gets short shrift

Security officers barred a bride from wedding at a Zimbabwe civil court, saying her short skirt was not decent enough as required by court rules. The groom was arrested and fined for arguing with policemen and trying to force his way into the building.

Reuters - Harare

Flat feeling

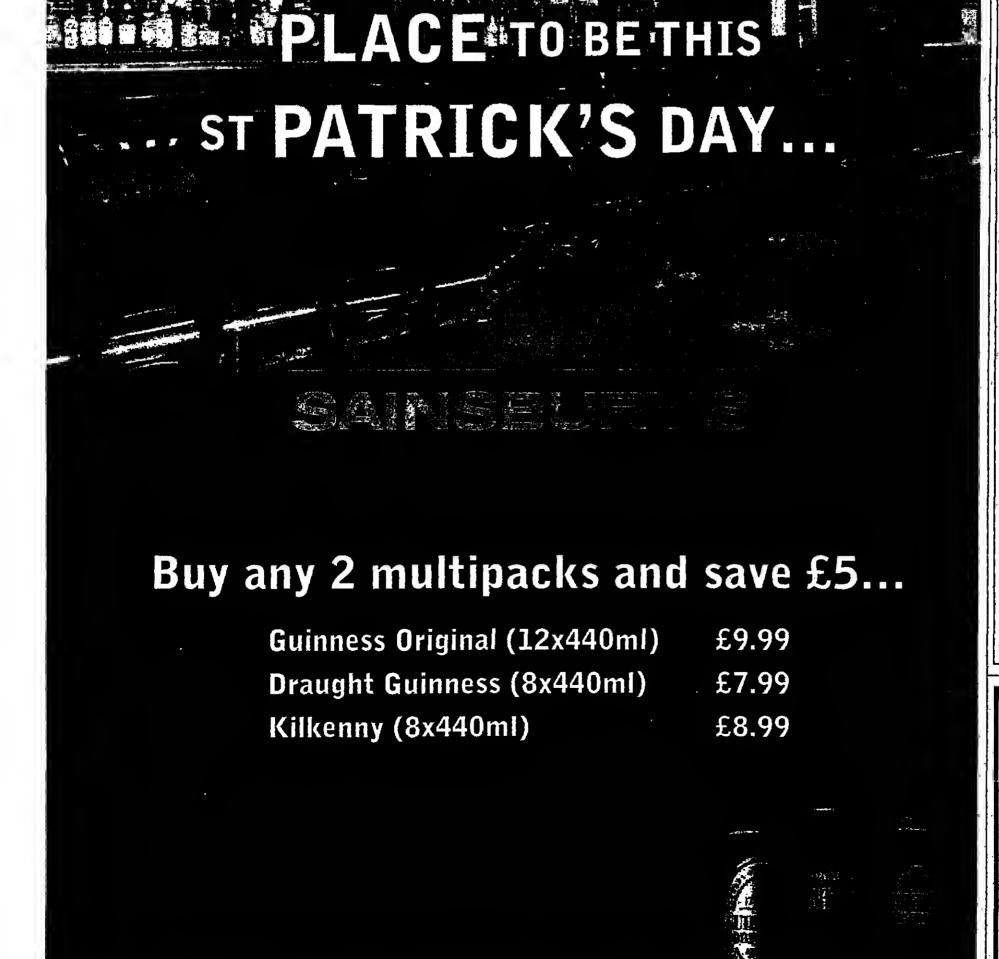
Flat-dwellers who flock to Ikea to buy furniture soon may be able to get their apartments there, too. Ikea and the Skanska group have begun a project to build cheap flats, for purchase or rent, at a cost of no more than 3,000 kronor (£240) a month, about 25 per cent lower than the

If we're cheaper than the AA or RAC, why join them?

HEROS INDIVISIONELS	DE COVER.
Recovery only	£29.50
Roadside assistance	£38.00
Comprehensive	£69.00
Comprehensive Gold	£93.00
Total protection	£145.00

Call free now on 0800 001 353 Green Flag

WE LEAVE EVERYORE STANDING BUT



Missilegate: Is this conspiracy or hoax?

And now: Missilegate. A top-secret, and officially banned, United States navy "chainsaw" missile accidentally destroyed a TWA jumbo jet and 230 people off Long Island last July, a report claimed yesterday.

The US government has covered up its involvement, from a mixture of embarrassment and determination to preserve the secrecy of the weapon, according to Pierre Salinger, journalist, former spokesman for President John F Kennedy and leader of a freelance investi-Mr Salinger told a press con-

ference in Paris yesterday that his group of ten experts, including several government officials, had reached these conclusions on the mysterious fate of flight TWA800

with "very great certainty".

But the FBI, which was given the Salinger report four days ago, dismissed its findings as a "cruel" hoax". There was no clear evidence that a missile destroyed the plane, the FBI said, although this remained one of three possibilities. The other two were a terrorist bombing or a mechanical mai-

Mr Salinger has been preoccupied by the unexplained destruction of the New York to Paris flight since he saw allegations of an accidental missile strike on the Internet. He called yesterday on the US Defense Secretary, William Cohen, to order



rday (left); and a photo of the alleged missile Photographs: Reuters/AP

fair, which he duhbed "Missile-

The report, co-ordinated by Mr Salinger through the Internet, says TWA800 was "destroyed by accident ... by a US navy missile which mistook its target"

This missile - probably a top-secret kinetic-energy or chain-saw missile containing no explosive warhead - was fired either from a submarine or from a missile ship engaged in secret military exercis es, the report said.

Mr Salinger produced stills of a video-recording of radar screens

the photograph would go to the families of the TWA800 victims. which, he claimed, showed a "missile heading towards the TWA Families of French victims of the plane". The Pentagon insists that disaster decided at the weekend to no missile has been fired in the area begin a civil action against an unfor two years but Mr Salinger said known culprit in the French courts. 154 witnesses on Long Island saw This is likely to bring about a juone or two missiles in the air that night. He said he had also been condicial investigation. A chain-saw or kinetic-energy or continuous rod missile is a fearsome tacted by a man with a son in the US Navy. The man said his son had

weapon, officially banned by intold him: "Dad, we destroyed the ternational treaty. It contains no warhead as such and, in flight, re-The video stills of the alleged sembles a huge rod of metal. When radar traces of the missile apit finds its target it blasts straight peared in Paris-Match magazine through and would tear an aircraft yesterday and Mr Salinger said the proceeds from the publication of



Reading between the lines: A Parisian examining the radar screen pictures in Paris-Match

Miners' victory parade mocks Kohl's feeble posturing

lasted 5

o differ

Thousands of miners rode into Bonn yesterday for an impromptu victory procession, ing two fingers aloft in salute of future of the coal industry. retirement, retraining and unthe government offices along. There will be no mass redun-specified make-work schemes.

lookers lining the road greeted ber of people employed in the the bikers with Mexican waves. protests, Chancellor Helmnt

pits will be cut by half. Over the After almost a week of next eight years, about 48,000 motests. Chancellor Helmnt miners will be made offers they Kohl and union leaders reached could not possibly refuse, in-a compromise yesterday on the cluding lavishly-funded early

To soften the immediate impact of the programme, the government agreed to close only one pit between now and the year 2000, and another three or four by 2005. Currently, there are 18 working collieries in Saarland and the Ruhr. "The

fight was worth it," declared

miners' trade union, who had shouted himself hoarse over the

The government also ap-peared reasonably satisfied with the deal. "We have ensured the survival of the mining industry in a way that is economically acceptable," said Friedrich Bohl. Mr Kohl's right-hand man in the chancellery. "We have ensured that changes in the mining industry can be carried out in a way that avoids mass layoffs."

Last year, the government paid DM10bn (£3.7bn) in sub-

Hans Berger, the leader of the costs two-and-a-half times the est. As a result, the taxpayers' world market price. Total coal subsidies, including contributions from the region of North Rhine-Westphalia, will be cut to

DM5.5hn over the next eight This figure, however, does not include the sums the government has discovered since thousands of miners pitched up tents in Bonn carlier in the week. Now the state coffers are miraculously flush with money. About DM300m a year extra will pour into the pits to persuade miners that a career change would be in their inter-

contribution to coal-mining will actually rise next year. The agreement was ham-

mered out overnight by union negotiators and chancellery officials, who stayed up till 5am haggling over the details. After Tucsday's debacle, when Mr Kohl cancelled his meeting with the union at short notice, the opposition Social Democrats stepped in to mediate.

The basic compromise postponing pit closures beyond 2000 - was arrived at during a meeting on Wednesday between the deputy leaders of the

two biggest parties: Wolfgang Schäuble of the Christian Democrats and Rudolf Scharping of the SPD. The SPD's key role in de-

fusing the tension offers an unflattering contrast to Mr Kohl's feeble posturings of the past lew days. Once again, the Chancellor has demonstrated he no longer has the authority to govern alone. After yesterday's agreement the Social Democrats announced they would resume talks with Mr Kohl. ostensibly about tax reforms, but in reality about some form of grand coalition.

ONLY

DEDICATED STAFF

Our specialty trained staff will guide you through all the latest technology to help you find exactly what you're looking for. Why not ask for a free demonstration?

• MULTIMEDIA HELPLINE From the moment you purchase a PC or Printer you can use Comet's exclusive helpline produced in confunction with Softbank - PSC (Europe's leading computer service support), just for the cost of a

 NO CLAIM MONEY BACK **5-YEAR WARRANTY**

A singla premium payment guarantees five years comprehensive cover against product breakdown and includes telephone helpline for 5 years. If, after five years, you've made no claim, you an get all your warranty money back in full. Ask in store for full details

MULTIMEDIA PACKAGE INCLUDES:

COMMODORE MULTIMEDIA PC

intel 120MHz Pentium processor for

high speed processing power

 BMb EDO RAM - allows you to run the latest software

1.2Gb hard disk drive - allows you to

store and retrieve vast amounts of

 8 speed CD ROM drive to run the latest multimedia software

Model P120, In-store £999.99 PLUS FREE LEXMARK **COLOUR PRINTER**

graphs and homework Prints up to 3 pages per minute 600 x 300 dpi print quality offers professional quality printing Model 1020, normally £159.99

PLUS FREE SOFTWARE WORTH OVER £260 INCLUDING:

MINI OFFICE WORKS Create charts, spreadsheets, reports and letters. RRP

PRINT ARTIST 3 Design labels, greeting cards, certificates and much, much more. RRP £19.99 MULTIMEDIA GAMING Virtua Fighting Nascar Racing and Panzer Dragoon. Separate selling RRP £119.97 WINDOWS '95 To help you operate your PC more easily, RRP 299.99

COMET

"Renewing your home cover in March, April or May?

Just look what you could Save if you Calling Midland Direct could save you a lot

of time and money. Some of our customers have sayed up to 30%. And you could save even more through our range of special discounts - call us now on the

Phone lines are open Sam-Spm Monday-Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) and 10am-2pm Saturday.

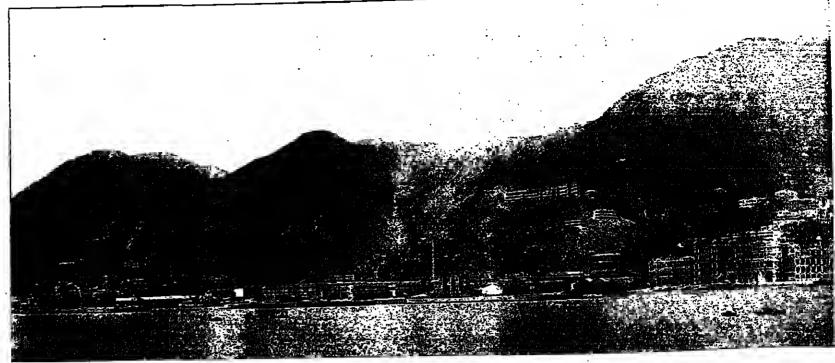
Midland Bank (X)



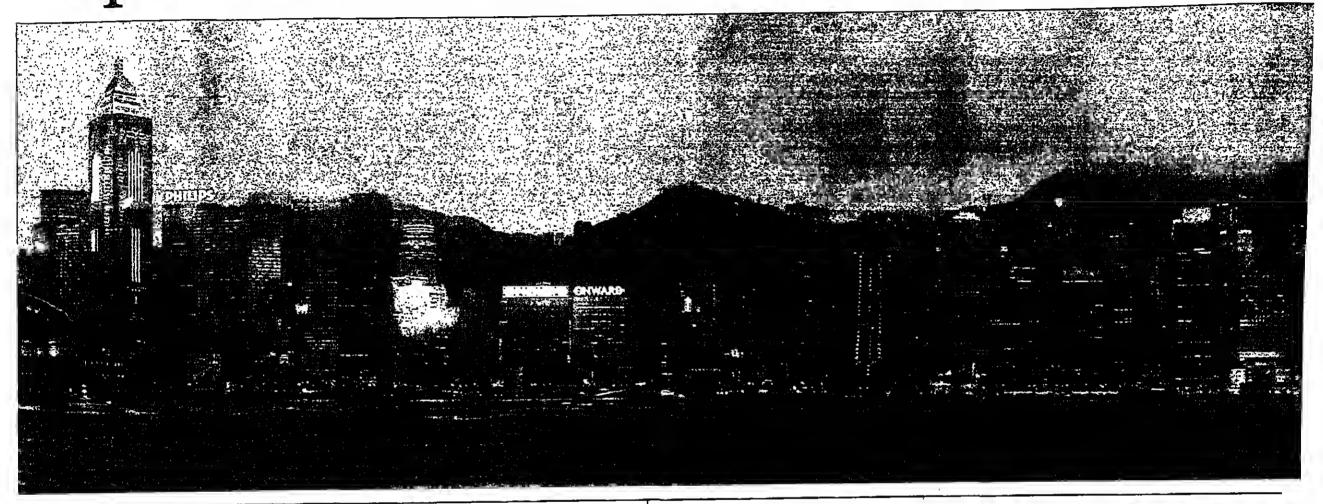
CALL FREE: 0800 277 377

international

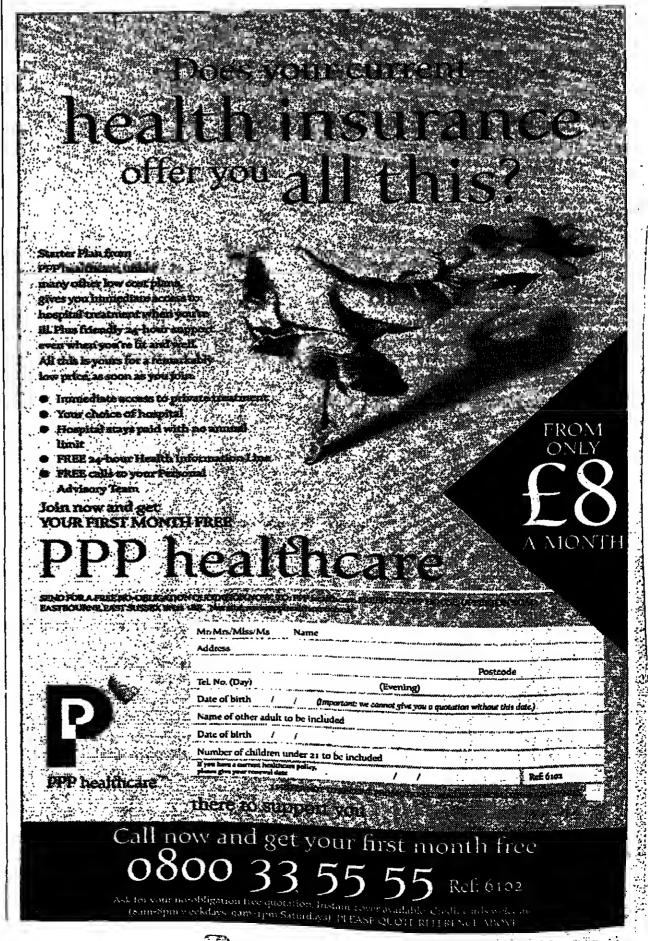
The transformation of Hong Kong: When the photograph on the right was taken in 1912, Chinese were second-class citizens in their own territory. They were not even allowed to live on the desirable Peak. Now the British are almost irrelevant. Paradoxically, the handover to China in three months' time is set to be an occasion for mixed emotions. Hong Kong is flourishing. Its skyline changes constantly, with an energy that seems the essence of the territory itself. This is a city of extraordinary vibrancy, where billions are made and lost. The future under Chinese rule is confused, at best. But Hong Kong seems unlikely to lose the identity that it has forged.



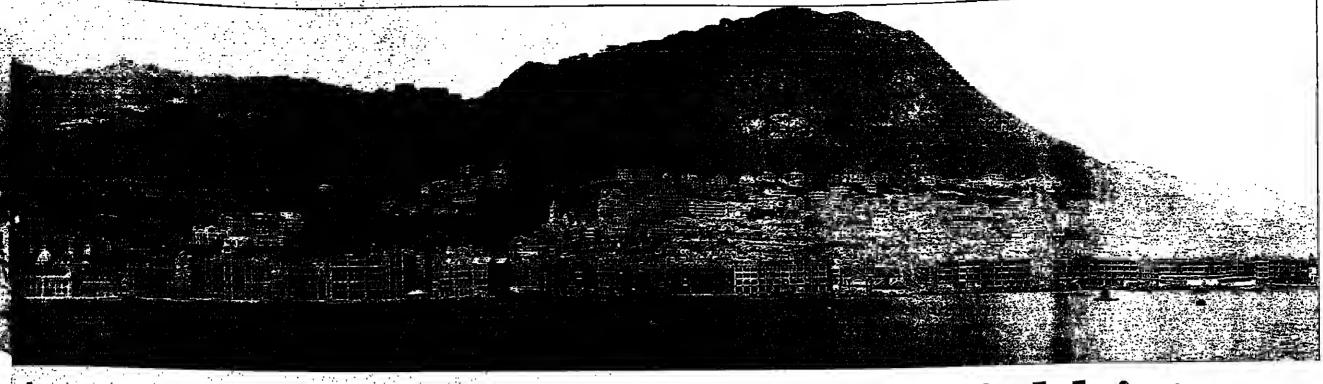
A panorama of the richest waterfront ir.



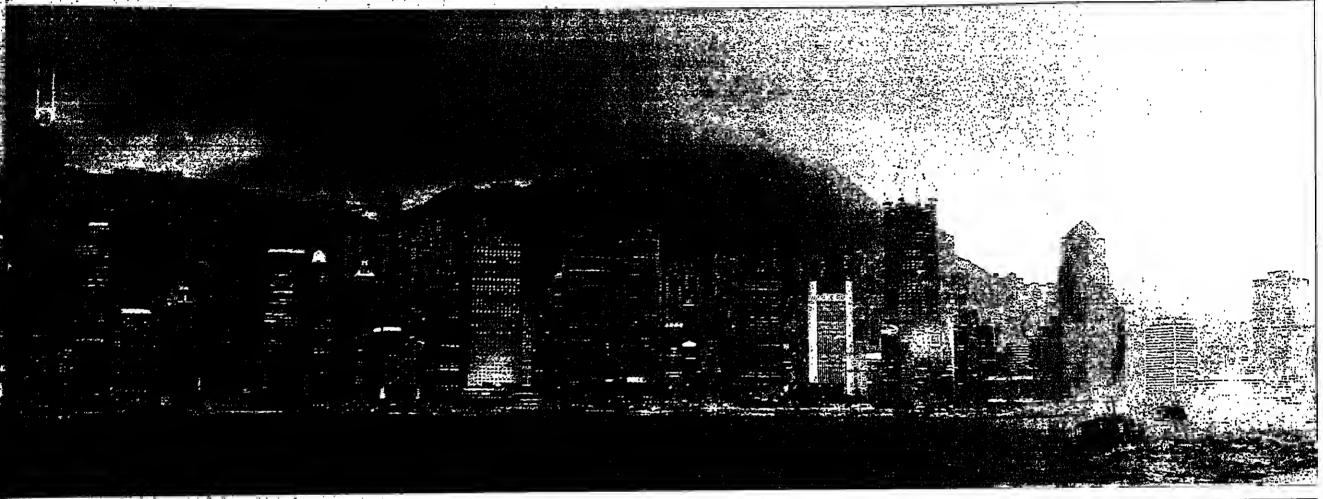




مكذا من الأصل



Ont Asia across a century of colonial history



Wherever you are in Hong Kong, at whatever time of the day or night, you are likely to hear one sound: drilling. The city has an estimated 4,000 building projects in progress at any one time, and as the towor blocks nestle ever closer together, its profile is not just changing upwards but

Hong Kong, with a population of 6.2 million, needs to house nearly two million exlion, needs to house nearly two million ex-tra people within the next 15 years. The Government is bracing itself for an extra 55,000 mainland immigrants annually and the 100,000 Chinese who will be eligible to live there following the handover. Many more Hong Kong Chinese are returning, pushing up demand in the private sector, while astronomical property prices have cre-ated a waiting list of nearly 150,000 for pub-lic housing, in response, the Government plans to build 400,000 flats a year for the plans to build 400,000 flats a year for the next five years, but it needs an estimated 3,000 hectares of land on which to build.

In a territory that is no more than two hours travelling distance from any two points, and in which most people's windows already look into someone else's windows, something has to give. And that something is the sea. Hong Kong's biggest reclamation project is the new Chek Lap Kok airport, where in an awe-inspiring feat, a mountainous island was levelled and reshaped into 1,248 hectares of flat land. But the South China Sea is having to heat In a territory that is no more than two

But the South China Sea is having to beat a retreat elsewhere - most notably in its famous "frugrant" harbour. On Hong Kong industrial interests. On riving along the few remaining areas where sea birds roost and nest.

for commercial and infrastructure purposes, which is slowly but inexorably bringing Hong Kong and Kowloon closer together. This has elicited protest from, among others, one of Hong Kong's few preservation societies—the Society for The Protection Of The Harbour, which says its "unique and irreplaceable public asset" should be preserved. It raised a petition of 148,000 signatures or possing the project citing signatures opposing the project, citing concerns about safety if the already crowded waters are narrowed further.

But the most vocal opposition has come from environmental protesters, who say that

from environmental protesters, who say that Hong Kong's development fever is getting out of control, and that the eventual effect on the territory could be catastrophic.

Lisa Hopkinson of Hong Kong's Friends of the Earth says the dredging and dumping involved in reclaiming large areas of land is destroying marine life. "They take up the layer of soft mnd which is highly toxic and move it to a site near the new airport which move it to a site near the new airport which is right next to a marine park," she says.

The marine park was built to protect the Chinese White Dolphin - whose numbers are rapidly depleting because of pollution.

As well as making Hong Kong's already polluted waters even more poisonous (few the starting forms, impabitants, would eat

of the territory's inhabitants would eat seafood they knew to be local) the dredging of sand from the bottom of the sea bed for "fill" is also problematic, she says.
"There's lots of it coming down from Chithere's loss of it coming town from the man – we don't know whether it's toxic, or where it's coming from." Much of the damage, she says, has already been done, with corals destroyed on the relatively clear eastern waters, and the depletion of fish stocks and nursery grounds and the few remain-

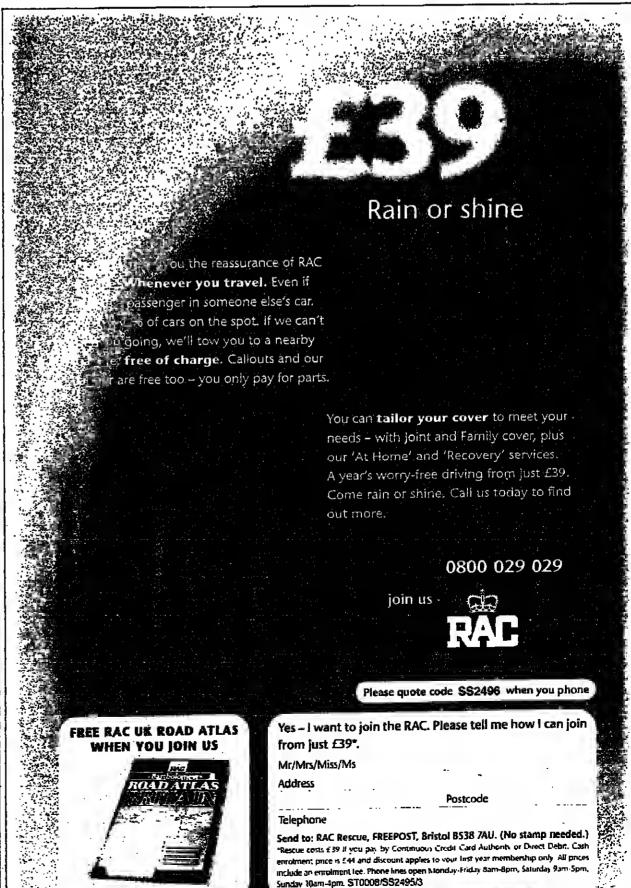
Hong Kong's Governmental Environ-mental Impact Agency makes recommendations for all major projects, but Ms Hopkinson says they are often ignored as there are no enforcement mechanisms in place. "We're not against reclamation in general," Ms Hopkinson said. "But we're questioning the need for it. The Governquestioning the need for it. The Government says there's an urgent housing problem but if you look at the land use breakdown, the amount sidelined for housing is only around 5 per cent."

Ms Hopkinson accuses the Government of "wringing their hands" and so Friends of the Earth have sent a position

Friends of the Earth have sent a position paper to the chief executive-designate. Tung Chee-hwa, asking to discuss the long-term sustainability of Hong Kong's development. "We're very concerned that the Government's Territorial Development Strategy ... is basically going to result in the severe degradation of environmental quality. Hong Kong will end up with a highly polluted harbour bringing more traffic, noise and air quality problems in populated areas."

She adds: "We've projected until 2047 and looked at ideas to show how it could become more sustainable, even if the population increases to 10 million. We're trying to get the Government to think about these things differently."

As yet there has been no formal response. Meanwhile, it emerged yesterday that the Government is expected to reap windfall land revenues on the back of more than HK\$34 billion (£2.7bn) in premiums paid by developers - thought to be the highest for a single fiscal year. Noise pollution com-plaints are up 800 per cent since 1991. And across Hong Kong the drills keep drilling.





Contemporary photograph: Tom Pilston-Archive photographs: Lt John Pepys

Bill Hilton

Bill Hilton's greatest claim to fame was that he coined the term "the sound barrier", yet he always maintained that this was the result of a misunderstanding by a journalist to whom he tried to explain the complex concept of supersonic travel in the 1930s. This was typical of a man who had a brilliant mind but never showed the least trace of pomposity. His career spanned major changes; he was an aerodynamicist at a time when the science was in its infancy, and was also in at the hirth of the space race.

Hilton was born in north London in 1912. He studied physics at the Royal College of Science and aerodynamics for his PhD at Imperial College. London. His postgraduate work was on photographing the vor-tices around arreraft which cause lift, enabling them to fly. He was the first person to photograph vortices on propellors; this research was used in 1976 in the design of the Westland Berp Helicopter, which still holds the world speed record for

helicopters. He joined the National Physical Laboratory in 1935 and became a Principal Scientific Officer in charge of the two wind tunnels, leading a team looking at the possibilities of supersonic flight. The wind tunnels were used for research on guided missiles, aircraft and ramjets. He was to remain there until the end of the Second World War; and advised on the Mulberry harbours (the prefabricated harbours towed across the Channel by the Allies), the bouncing bomb and the

development of the jet engine. At the end of the war he was seconded by the National Physical Laboratory to the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns

Hopkins University in Maryland, in the United States. where he worked on Project Bumblehee ramjet research into supersonic propulsion for missiles. He returned to the UK in 1949 and worked briefly for the Royal Aircraft Establishment, before joining Armstrong Whitworth as Chief Aerody-namicist in 1950, where he set up his third high-speed wind tunnel. He published a standard reference book, High Speed

Aerodynamics (1951). By the late 1950s his interest was turning to the new field of space, and as the Head of the Astronautics Section of the Advanced Projects Group at Hawker Siddeley in Kingston, Surrey, he led the first industrial team in the UK studying the po-tential of communications satellites. He is remembered by colleagues as an inspirational team leader. He suggested a cheaper alternative to the standard circular orbit designed by Arthur C. Clarke for communications satellites; by describing an ellipse and so coming closer to the earth lor part of the orbit it was possible for satellites to carry a greater payload and yet provide excellent coverage of the northern hemisphere. Called the "Hilton orbit", it is still in use today by Russia under the Molniya programme. However, following the short-sighted decision by the British government not to press ahead with communications satellites, which became a multi-million-dollar industry, he

Hilton spent 18 months from 1963 in Paris as Secretary of the International Astronautical Federation and continued to attend their annual congresses for the rest of his life. Indeed, he presented a paper, "Commu-

was forced to change direction.

nications with Extra Terrestrial Intelligence (CETI)", to the Peking Congress in 1996 at the age of 84, since he saw this as the next great step. He worked for the British Aircraft Corporation from 1966 as Assistant to the Technical Director, before taking early retirement in 1973 to pursue his many other interests and to continue his work on the Councils of the Royal Acronautical Society and the British Interplanetary Society.

Bill Hilton's hobbies were many and varied. He had played the ukulele since his mother bought him one from a market stall for 2s 6d as a child; since he had never seen one before, he began by playing it upturned on his lap. In his later years he hecame a member of the George Formby Society and the Ukulele Society of Great Britain: he recalled with enthusiasm a meeting with Formby himself. A number of scientific conferences throughout the world were enlivened by Hilton and his ukulele. He was also a keen skater and a pelargonium grower, who had plants in bloom throughout the

William Frank Hilton, aerody-namiciss; born London 10 June 1912: Principal Scientific Officer. National Physical Laboratory 1935-46: Aerodynamics Group Supervisor, Applied Physics Lab-oratory, Johns Hopkins Universi-ty 1946-49, Chief Aerodynamicist. Armstrong Whitworth 1950-59; Leader, Astronautics Section, Advanced Projects Group, Hawker Siddeley 1959-61; Secretary, International Astronautical Federation 1963-64; married 1939 Joan Unwin (one son, two daughters); died Epsom, Surrey 6 March



she gave the part of Paula

vate lives of famous players who,

put it, "are subject to laws, dis-

and like fairies court disaster

Jordan what Agate called

Margaret Vines

Margaret Vines was an actress Desdemona and the whole to whom the critic James Agate was "not prepared to deny the possibility of greatness". He called her "our shyest, most timorous neophyte" and she played one highly praised West End leading role after another in the 1920s and 1930s. A slim, wistful brunette with an engaging line and feyness, she was on the stage for 40 years; but was the first to admit that she neglected her theatrical career for the sake of the men in her life.

In an age in which great acting of the kind dispensed by Eleonora Duse, Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry was still in living memory, Vines stood out not just for her looks and theatrical technique but as an actress of the highest potential.

For Agate she provided in a play called *Take Two From One* (Haymarket Theatre, 1931) a short 10 minutes of unearthly radiance which look the shine out of everybody else". When he saw her again the following season in Rudolph of Austria (Arts Theatre), "she had not been on the stage five minutes before one realised that here, if she puts herself into the proper hands. is the next Viola, Cordelia.

category of faithful hearts".

Did the actress then start looking for someone to steer her career into the highest classical places? She did not. She never gave it a thought. "I'm afraid I was a complete flapper," she confessed years later. "There I was having a big success and all these wonderful parts; and it never occurred to me that it would ever be any different. I was young for my age and green, and very, very fey." Having become a West End star in her twenties she "didn't realise that on the stage you've got to keep an eye to the main chance. take note of all the little jealousies and rivalries and be madly ambitious all the time".

Instead she just enjoyed herself. She married, had a daughter, ran away with another man, was divorced, had a son, and one day after the Second World War found herself facing life alone with children and a sick mother to care for. "No career, no job, no money and no man," as she put it. 'And it was all my own fault," she said in 1956, when she was interviewed as a pre-war wonder who had end-



Vines: "I was a complete flapper clothes and just made what she hoped was a come-back; though

by then she had married for a

second time. The shop was awful but 1 had to live and that was all I could find. Then a friend found me a joh in a small antiques shop in Hampstead. It was very cosy and genial and I loved it and I might have gone on doing it," had her first major role for years not been offered in 1956. This was a shrivelled and inhibited spinster in Paul Osborn's Morning's At Seven (Comedy and Westminster, 1956). As this pent up in a thin parcel of ner-vons fidgets" (as one senior critic put it). Vines won the Clarence Derwent Award for the best West End supporting actress of the year.

Vines was born in Portuguese East Africa in 1907, trained for the stage at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and first ap-peared in London at the Brix-. ton Theatre in 1926. Between understudying Elissa Landi in The Constant Nymph and Peg-Ashcroft Naomi Jew Suss (Duke of York's. 1929), Vines acled in repertory at Hull and Birmingham.

Returning to the West End and Agate's acclaim in 1931 - she found herself accused of mumhling, "It may be that Miss Vines is not a great player in embryo," thundered the critic. "At the same time she is one of the only two novices now claiming attention - the other is a youth - to whom 1 am not prepared to deny the possibility of greatness." In the Kaufman-Ferber comedy Dinner at Eight (Palace Theatre, 1933), in which she

when they marry mortals". The reference hooks are silent about her between 1934 and 1938, when she turned up made her Broadway début bein Shakespeare at the Open Air fore staying on in New York as Theatre in Regent's Park, Lou-Anne of Bohemia in Gordon don. Her Titania in A Midsumed up in a shop selling women's unquiet and revengeful spirit Daviot's Richard of Bordeaux. mer Night's Dream and Marina Sussex 1 March 1997.

in Pericles were both outstanding; but during the Second World War she did not act all, "not even for Ensa".

"I suppose it was my own

a pathos which would have been un-bearable if she had not also invest-ed her with a pinched enunciation that was intolerable. Miss Vines fault that I faded right out of the must at once set about to remedy this, since the fault is so excruciating as to threaten her whole career. theatre. For one thing I was too busy looking after my small son Vines evidently obeyed. She in the country," Apart from a was "enormously improved" as 1945 season for Alec Clunes's the grand-daughter in Noet. Arts Theatre company in which: her Lady Teade triumphed with next Kanfinan-Ferber comedy, "the 'uniocent glee of a misTheatre Royal' (Lyric Theatre, chievous schoolgril" and a sea-1934), with Marie Tempest and son at Pitlochry Theatre Festival Laurence Olivier as other memin 1960, Vines found it "impossible to get back. Managers seemed to have forgotten me bers of a famous American acting family (based on the Barrymores). The play may have rung personal hells for Vines, with its satire on the pricompletely." She joined the BBC drama repertory company. There were occasional tryouts and television plays such as "like fairies" as another critic Ibsen's Pillars of Society and the series Emergency Word Ten and cipline and traditions which are film parts. She finally retired as strong as those in the mortal from the stage in the 1960s. workaday world, but different:

Adam Benedick

Margaret Vines, actress: born 16 January 1907; married 1927 Edward Loftus-Tottenham (one daughter; marriage, dissolved; one son by Basil Sydney), second Denis Goacher (marriage dissolved); died East Grinstead.

Professor Robert Browning

John Snell of Glasgow, bene-factor of Balliol, has a lot to an-swer for. Since 1699 Snell Exhibitioners, graduates of Glas-benefit of Glasgow, bene-met his first wife Galina. In Belgrade he was assistant to the British Military Attaché. gow, have traditionally shoul-dered a bag of oats and headed south, past Sweetheart Abbey in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, where lies the heart of John Balliol, to his college in Oxford, for four further years of hard labour. This is austere training.

After Kelvinside Academy,

Robert Browning of Glasgow added his name to over 200 others when Professor Rennie called the roll for his Ordinary Class in the Humanity Department of Glasgow University in 1931. By 1935 Browning was therefore older than others of his year when he presented himself as Suell Exhibitioner at Balliol Born in 1914, be faced youths born in 1916, such as Kenneth Garlick (art historian), Edward Heath (organ scholar) and Rodney Hilton (social historian, with whom from 1965 Browning was to collaborate on the then radical journal Past & Present). Browning was a natural elder, somebow always a member of a Senior rather than Junior Common Room (over which Heafh presided).

Besides his Firsts in Mods and

Greats, Browning collected the full house of classical prizes and scholarships (for the record: Nowlands, Ireland, Craven, Fer-guson, De Paravicini, and Jenkyns; his Chancellor's Prize was for a Latin version of Hume's "Essay on Avarice").

He also started collecting languages - Albanian came early. This was a surprising hobby for one whose preferred method of communication to an ndividual; whether by postcard or muttered aside, was as laconic as it was distinctive - almost furtive. His languages, which never found Browning ata loss for words among schol-ars abroad, were mined by listening to East European radio stations at night after Munich. minute without altering the angle of his smile. Such style was to entrance generations of

research students, who never forgot the matter.
Nineteen thirty-nine brought Browning his second degree and seven years' service, initially in the Royal Artillery. He learnt Georgian in a troop-ship round the Cape. In Carro he worked with another Hellenist, Enoch Powell, and met his second wife, Ruth. In Italy he was on the Geueral Staff. In Sofia he was on the



Nine Rivers from Jordan, with

a libretto by Denis Johnson, was

In 1946 Browning returned first as a Harmsworth Senior Scholar at Merton College, Oxford, and then established himself in London University: from 1947 to 1965 in University College, and from 1965 to his retirement in 1981 as Professor of Classics and Ancient History at Birkbeck.

Such a formation made Browning a Hellenist first. From Giasgow, Snell's benefaction sent no more severe a textual critic to Balliol. But ex-perience of the Balkans brought to this grounding medieval and modern Greek (the title of Browning a influential hand-book of 1969) too. The classicist became a Byzantinist, at his most subtle with classical texts seen through Byzantine eyes. He chaired both the Societies for the Promotion of Hellenic and Byzantine Studies. He was review editor both of the Journal of Hellenic Studies and editor of the hibliography of the Byzan-tinische Zeitschrift magazine.

An internationalist, vicepresident of the International Byzantine Association from 1981: the years between Balliol and Belgrade were also a con-text for Browning's politics, which were an enigma to those who sought continuity between his seductive studies Justinian and Theodora (1971), naturally Byzantium and Bulgaria (1975) and The Byzantine Empire (1980), and his contributions to the Historians' Group of the British Communist Party in the

heady days before Hungary. Some misread Browning's cryptic asides. It dawned on his students that he was most concerned for them, particularly if they were foreign, or as "mature" as a Snell Ethibitioner. Typically, it was in Canberra that Maistor, the title of his first Festschrift, was published on Australian ini-But, placed on a platform, tiative in 1984; and this year it Browning was loquacions. He was in Venice that *Philellen*, the could deliver over 300 words a title of his second, was published on Greek initiative.

Robert and Ruth Browning enjoyed his formal retirement from Birkbeck in 1981. He animated a further generation of students in Dumbarton Oaks, which is Harvard University's Byzantine research outpost in Washington DC. He advised the new University of Cyprus and was forthright about where the Elgin Marbles should he. John Snell's Exhibitioner could also rummage in his bag of oats to find another collection: of honours, from the keys of Athens to a Birmingham doctorale. But it is by their students and the love of their students that great didacts are known.

Anthony Bryer

Robert Browning, Byzantinist: born Glasgow 15 January 1914; Lecturer, University College London 1947-55, Reader 1955-65; Professor of Classics and Ancient History, Birkbeck College, London 1965-81 (Emeritus); FBA 1978: married 1946 Galina Chichekova (two daughters). 1972 Ruth Gresh; died London 11 March 1997.

Hugo Weisgall



The composer of 10 operas staged in the United States between 1952 and 1993. Hugo Weisgall also wrote several ballets, many songs (including eight song cycles), choral works, chamber music and liturgical settings. He was also an excellent conductor, teacher and administrator. Three of his operas, Six Characters in Search of an Author, based on Pirandello's play, Nine Rivers from Jordan, with a text by Denis Johnson, and Esther, taken from the Bible, were derived from works by Wedckind, Strindberg, Yeats. Racine and Mishima. In 1995 he won the William Shuman Award, do-nated by Columbia University to an American composer for a lifetime's achievement.

Conservatory, Baltimore, then with Fritz Remer and Rosario Scalerio at the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia, gaining diplomas in conducting (1938) and com-position (1939). He also studied composition with Roger Sessions. He was awarded his PhD by Johns Hopkins University for a dissertation on primitivism in 17th-century German poetry in 1941.

After military service in Europe the was stationed in London as assistant military attaché to governments in exile. 1945-46). Weisgall returned to the US to begin his career in earnest. He was director of the Baltimore Institute of Musical Arts [1949-51]. University. New York, this time

US with his parents in 1920 Johns Hopkins. Having wanted two operas, Nigit and Lilith, while a student in the 1930s, he Bohemia), and emigrated to the then took a post teaching at one-act piece based on Wedekind's play Der Kammersänger, which was produced in February 1952 by the Peabody Opera Company, Baltimore. Weisgall himself conducted. In August the same year another one-act opera. The Stronger, based on Strindberg's Den Starkare, was performed, with piano accom-paniment, at the White Barn Theatre in Westport, Connecti-cut, by the Hill Top Opera Company, founded by the composer earlier in 1952. This dramatic monologue - there are three characters, but only one, a soprano, sings - was revised and performed in 1955 at Columbia

finest works.

Coloratura (the Leading Lady in Pirandello's play). By now Weisgall's highly individual style, evolved from Neoclassicism and Bergian Expressionism, was fully formed. His next opera, Purgatory, after W.B. Yeats, was performed in Washington DC at the Library of Congress in 1961. It was followed by Athaliah, based on Racine, which re-ceived a concert performance in New York in 1964.

with orchestra. It is one of his Moving to a new teaching

produced at the New York City post at the Juilliard School in New York, Weisgall next com-Opera in 1968. It attempted, over-amhitiously, "to deal with posed a three-act opera, Six the unprecedented problems Characters in Search of an Au-... caused by the Second World War" - in other words, to "ex-plain" the Holocaust - and was thor, for the New York City Opera, where it was produced in April 1959 during a season denot popular. Much more sucvoted to operas by American composers. Beverly Sills sang the cessful was Jennie, or the Hundred Nights, commissioned by the Juilliard School, and performed at the American Opera Center there in 1976. The text was adapted from a modern Noh play by Yukio Mishima, the setting transferred to 19thcentury London. The Garden of Adonis, originally written in 1959 and revised between 1977 and 1981, was finally performed in 1992 at the Witherspoon Concert Hall in Omaha. It was based on André Obey's play, it-

self based on Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis. In Weisgall's final opera, Es-

ther, premiered at the New York City Opera in 1993, the composer at last achieved his ambition to write a Holocaust opera, using the Old Testament story as a parable, with the villainous Haman standing for the Nazis and Esther herself for the Jewish people. Weisgall's later style, leaner and more dissonant, suited the subject perfectly and the opera scored a great success, and is to be revived by NYCO next season. Elizabeth Forbes

Hugo David Weisgall, composer: born Eibenschutz, Moravia 13 October 1912; married 1942 Nathalie Shuhnan (one son, one daughter); died New York 11 March 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

HALLETT: Ben, retired Vice-Principal of Brunet Technical College, Bristol, 9 March 1997, ceaselessly and kwingly nursed over declaring months by Margers, wife of 0.2 happy years, Much loved by two children and eight grandclildren. Further and cre-mation at Canturd Corneters, Bristol mation at Cantord Cemetery, Bristol at 1.50pm, Monday 17 March, all

NICHOLSON: In loving memory of fimothy Giff, who pussed away on 7 March, aged 40. He was a dear triend and an inspiration to all who lower and loved him. Ruth and Patricia Muchell.

ements for Gazette BURTHS. MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at

Birthdays

Prince Albert of Monaco, 39: Sir Kenneth Alexander, Chancellor, Aberdeen University, 75; Miss Pam Ayres, poet, 56; Professor Sir Michael Berry, research professor. Bristol University, 56; Mr Ian Bruce MP, 50; Mr Michael Caine, actor, 64; Mr Jasper Carrott, comedian, 52: Pro-tessor Sir Colin Dollery, former Dean, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, 60; Mr Alan Ellion, chief con-stable, Cembria, 55; Li-Gen Sir Peter Graham, former General Officer Commanding, Scotland, 60; Sir Philip Holland, Jormer MP, 80; Mr Quincy Jones, bandleader, 64; Sir Gavin Laird, chairman, Greater Manchester Beses North, 64: Air Chief Marshal Sit Douglas Lowe, 75; Mr John McCallum actor and producer, 79; Lord Marsh, former chairman. Newspaper Publishers' Association. 69. Sir Eric Norris, former diplomat, 79; Mr Bill Owen, actor, 82; Sir Richard Parsons, former ambassador to Sweden, 69: Dame Berry Pa-

eral Paul Rader, General of the Saivation Army, 63: Miss Tessa Sander-son, javelin thrower, 41: Mr William Sillery, Headmaster, Bellast Royal Academy, 56; Mr Anthony Smith, President, Magdalen College, Oxford 50 Miss Rita Tushingham, actress, 55; Sir Nicholas Wall. High Court

Weisgall was born in Eiben-

schutz, Moravia (now Ivancice.

Anniversaries

Births: Georg Philipp Telemann. organist and composer, 1681; Johann Strauss the Eider, composer, 1802; Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy, 1820: Giovanni Virginio Schiaparel-li, astronomer, 1835: Mrs Isabella Mary Beeton (Mayson), author of household and cookery books, 1856: Albert Einstein, physicist, 1879. Deaths: Admiral John Byng, executed for neglect of duty 1757: John Jervis. Earl of St Vincent, admiral of the fleet. 1823; Karl Marx, political philosopher, 1883; William Hale White ("Mark Rutherford"), novelterson, former chairman, North West ist, 1913; George Eastman, photo-Thames Health Authority, SI; Gen- graphic inventor, 1932; Busby

Berkeley (William Berkeley Enos), chereographer, 1976; Sir How Pyrs Wheldon, broadcaster and administrator, 1980. On this day, the first production of The Mikado, by Gilbert and Sullivan, was staged at the Savny Theatre, London, 1885; the first transatiantic radio broadcast was made, 1925; the New English Bible (New Testament), a new translation, was published in London, 1961. Today is the Feasi Day of St Eutychins or Eustathins of Carrhae, S Leobiaus or Lubin and St Matilda.

Lectures National Gallery: Norman Coady Ascetics (ii): Flippin . Lippi. The Virgin and Child with Saires Jenome and Dominic . lpm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Sus:

Morris, "Le Sueur", Bust of Charles British Museum: Chice Sayer "Mexican Tentiles", 1.15pm. Loughborough University: Dr Peter Batham, "Science in the Kitchen",

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS ROYAL ENGAGEN ENTS
The Queue with Rever's School Crebeau Survey The
Dark of both Durren Enderste on the crebit or the Engthen of the Durren Enderste on the crebit or of Engtering as the National Enders in the Company
of the National Enders in the Park of Enderscripts
about Special Property Green, high a reception of
Botheringer Polace. The Princers Regular opens a rese
for the Polace School Corrent to the Control of Enderscripts
and Special Property Green's the Special Opens a few
forth Polace School Largette to the Polace of
Polace School International Enderscripts
and Location Hough the Special Enough Enderscript
School Control Hough on the Polace School
Control Largette Control on the Polace School
Control Largette Control on the Polace School
School Enderscript I contribute, and Poul Sense
Kantey Enderscript I contribute, and Poul Sense
Kantey Enderscript Control
of the National World School Enderscript Sense
of the National World School Enderscript
and the School World School Enderscript
Control Enderscript Sense
of the National World School Enderscript
and the National World School
Enderscript School
Ender

Changing of the Guard The Homeshild Caralin Mounted Regioners income the On, of a late front of Homes Grantis, Plant North Proceedings of the Colored Street, and proceedings of the Colored Street, and proceedings of the Colored Street, and the Colored Street, and

Synagogue services Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in Lundon at 5.49µm.

Calted Synapogners 0181-343 2009, Federa-tion of Synapogners 0181-322 2263. Union of Liberal 2nd Progressive Synapogners 0171-559 1663. Reform Synapogners of Great Britain 9181-349 4731. Spanish and Per-tuguess Levs Congregation: 0171-320 2573. New London Synapogne 13 Lacorett: 0171-328 1026.

CALLS TO THE BAR

Lincoln's Inn

Lincoln's Inn

Harel Margaret McLean, Chris Mitropoulus, Lloyd Roy Patterson, Gory Antony Inneson; Faysal Ali Coze, Alexander Peter MucLinen; Stahm Farzer, Jacqueline Elizabeth Anne Edwards; Mishi Lee, Piers William Benediet Harmons Md Nizamul Haque; Mehta-Despina Theodorides; Lurrens Arwar Human, Joseph Michael Farren; David Mark Bost, Engene Ting Sek Farre, Chesper-Jeghan Pang, Steve Mathenesingh; William Amako; Chia Juac Han; Adeleka Jacob Alovale, Mohamused Ali, John Francis Lamone, George Wilkiam Meyrick; Elizabeth Ann Scott Kerr, Jeremy James Momis; Umer Alexan; Josephen Peter Dawson; Megan Katoh Lewin; Ashiey Harhangee; Juha Lencor,
Alexis Sachdest; Putrak Christopher Aspar, Angels Maria Healy, Charles James Sanuel Rendell-Beytolik, Helen Elizabeth Staley, Steviam Em Josephen Febr London; Karen Thomas Sephen; Jenefa Khaton Jabhar.

Natseem Yansel, Andrew Vew; Ishrat Mahmud, Suphen Jenkins Melven; Ingrid Rascoc; Yanchub Fil Met.

Hilary Term 1997

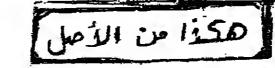
Inner Temple
Robert Nicholas Wrack; Paul Goodwin Cniworth; John Stanley Crein; Sancon Speacer;
Leslie: William Smith; Christopher John
Armstrong, Loona Hasanika; Kimberley,
Pramer; Graeme Harmine; Hugh Charles;
Millours; Jacqueliam Lisuleux; Lieu Rochelle
Phillips; Celso Luis Carismen Da Americo;
Sophie Laura Ashroni; Luien Esmil; Pakal
Karian; Leon Miller Himile: Cliva Onler Harrison; Saruh; Jane Vine, In Absender Utele
Imonda Burnhari; Suphen Miland Chrone.

Middle Temple

Middle Temple
Emon Augustine O'Malley, Elizabeth
Thompson; Wendy Anne Cook, David
Charles Foamen, Lason Christophers Uso Don
Book; Eric Peny Bouret, John Dompie Upton Simon Mark Berry, Catherine Mary Donnelly, Remain: Andrew Chappaner, Holest
Margaret Willer; Harrier Nitschi AdampaGort; Samon David Crown; Zoo Vizzoria
Lane-Smith: Demons Marin Lae; Tempthy
Daniel Treatherz; Jacqueline Villejo; Claire
Mark Cray; Limi Impas Yeats; Johns Tohy
Demois Mangham! Gareth Francis Thomas
Compton Neil James Downey; Lee Richard
Humby; Colin George Holmes Suchi;
Michelle Al Ling The; Alexander George

Gray's Inn

Michael Antony Jude O'Donnell; Sesan Gunt Eng Golt; Per Christian Laleng, James Collins; Jonesta Bridin Loweder, Ymoethy Mark Harringtor, Fergis Hand Currie; Mar-lamae Ventre Parlins; Adam John Brooker Western; Richard Kwame Swaltz Inyundo; Western, Richard Kwame Swaka Inyundo:
Anne Marie Wooding Erard Barcley Simmone Mobattoned Alu Zafer, Bensemin Authony Lowana; Huma Ali: Bether Many
Athanon; Williams Michael Christian Heoling:
Abdel Kashem Mahasumad Bakitral Islam;
Maria Colling: Deburah Wooldwhise; Christopher John Bjieliey, Lin Susan Colley; Richard
John Makinat; Patrick Joseph Baggar; Mare
Paul Jenne; Pama Louise Keelar; Dafydd
Griffiths; Michael James Royston Astocroft:
Luvrence Jeffen Casello Selly; Jeffrey Paul
Hill: Nicholas Joint Graham Lang; Monica



sted by

nber

H base

307.90

2-19-6

the leader page

The armed forces don't need a uniform sexuality

think gays are a freak of nature, Strasbourg, as contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights, which is says one of the Tory-voting guests in The Dinner Party, a television documentary to be screened soon. This is a new variation on the theme of "I am not a racist, but..." and "I am not sexist, but...". Prejudice is still abroad in this country although it is, fortunately, not respectable. Hence the shock value of Channel 4's latest documentary foray. The last bastion of respectable prejudice, however, is the armed forces. A fellow Dirner Party diner contributes to the debate: "We don't want effing queers in the Army." This was perhaps rather crudely expressed, but Government ministers still feel able to express the same sentiments in the House of Commons. Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, would not publicly urge women to get back to the kitchen or the Prime Minister to play the race card in the coming election. But he will say, as he did yesterday: "The Government supports the armed forces in their wish to maintain a ban on homosexuality in the services. Homosexuality is not compatible with the trust that must exist between comrades in arms."

This is pre-election posturing of the most unsavoury kind. He must know, as we all do, that the European Court of Justice will strike down the ban on gays in the military as contrary to European Union discrimination law. It will also be

Convention on Human Rights, which is separate from the EU. Mr Soames's determination to fight the Perkins case, referred to Lixembourg by the High Court yesterday, is synthetic. "I fear that Labour, if elected, would give up the case," he went on.

Tony Blair, too, has been guilty of unattractive pre-election posturing on this issue. Last May, he, his deputy John Prescott, his moral commissar David Bhinkett, and his defence spokesman David Clark, all abstained in a Commons vote to lift the ban on gays in the mili-tary. Pretty it was not. Understandable, in the light of Bill Clinton's experience with this issue on coming to office. Understandable, in view of the depths to which Mr Soames showed the Tories were prepared to sink. But not at all The question is whether discrimina-

tion on grounds of race, sex or sexuality is justified in any of the uniformed services. The answer is no. Twenty years after the Sex Discrimination Act and the European Equal Treatment Directive, this should not be controversial. And yet this Government has shown itself willing to pay out large sums of money on behalf of the armed forces and the police in hopeless defence of their right to discriminate against women and homosexuals. Police forces have recently been found by the courts to have failed struck down by the other Euro-court, in to control sexual harassment of women



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON EH 5DL TELEPHONE 0171-288 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-268 2435 / 0171-345 2435

officers, and the Strasbourg court will rule on Alison Halford's case over discrimination in promotion on Monday.

Why is it that uniformed services think they operate by different laws? All the arguments fall apart under close scrutiny. The distinguishing feature of these services is the requirement for discipline and teamwork in acutely stressful situations. Mr Soames's choice of terms goes to the heart of the discriminators' case: "trust" and "comrades in arms". The case is that you cannot have the essential bonding, the camaraderie, that will survive under fire or in a riot, unless you have a homogenous group of

white straight men. But it is a difficult case to spell out, as MPs found when they tried to look at it in the Armed Forces Committee last year. Much nonsense was talked about people having to live in "close proximity" to each other, about

showers and sleeping arrangements. This is all about sex and symbolism and things people find difficult to talk about. But open discussion is needed. because it will help both the armed forces and the public at large confront their irrational fears. Many service chiefs used to be instinctively hostile to women in comhat roles in the armed forces, but if they were made to talk pect that the same would apply to the issue of homosexuals.

Homophobia runs deep in wider society, but there is also a countervailing liberal tendency of which this country should be proud, of tolerating what other people get up to in private. Open discussion would help the second overcome the first. Of course, there have to be rules about what people get up to in private in uniformed services, as there are, in fact, in most organisations, written or unwritten. Sexual conduct does matter, especially when bosses and sub-ordinates have affairs: discipline and team loyalty can be undermined, and sexual tension creates uncertainties that can devastate proper working relationships. But sensible rules about sexual shenanigans apply equally to everyone.

Finally, the nonsense about "effectiveness". It is a code for virility, and, while there is a role for controlled aggression in the police and the armed forces (and almost any other job), there is no reason why women or gay men are not able to show it. True, women are not so interested in zapping aliens in computer games, but many excel at the team skills of running operations centres and making fast decisions which matter as much or more in real war, or running a crime-breaking operation.

For the police, certainly, effectiveness must depend to an extent on the force's connectedness with the society it exists

about it came round to the idea. We sus- to serve. How many miscarriages of justice would have been avoided if the social base of police forces had been broader, if the pool of talent on which they could draw had been deeper? That is the principal argument in favour of open recruitment. And it ought to go without saving that it is unhealthy for the armed forces. like the police, to be unrepresentative of the society they exist to defend. In a democracy, socially representative uniformed forces are an important guarantor of everyone's security.

The Lady's right behind you, John

aroness Thatcher will be working flat our in the election campaign to support the Prime Minister. a spokesman for her office said yesterday. Why Lady Thatcher thought a denial was needed is a mystery. First this week she was accused of backing Michael Portillo in the undeclared Conservative leadership campaign. Then it was alleged that she thought Tony Blair was a decent chap who "won't let Britain down". What preposterous ideas! Mr Portillo is a One Nation Tory who wants to subsidise the royal yacht. And Mr Blair has made his distaste for Lady Thatcher's firm style of leadership absolutely plain. She should replace her spokesman forthwith.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Care rules for the old favour spendthrifts

Sir: Your leading article of 11 March fails to address a crucial issue - the perverse incentives resulting from the existing arrangements for paying for long-term care of the old.

If I have worked hard and been careful with my money throughout my working life, and if I have saved and invested in my own home, then. when I become old and frail or struck down by Alzheimer's, the state will expect me to sell my house to pay for long-term residential care. But if I have been idle and

squandered my money, and if I have not planned for the future but will happily pay in full for my long-

You refer to the estimated £200m a year that the proposed scheme may cost. What you ignore is that a pensioner living in their own home who has paid off their mortgage before retirement will not be a hurden on the state beyond their basic pension. But the pensioner still renting their home will need the state to pay housing costs for perhaps 20 or 30 years of healthy retirement. This represents a far higher burden on the taxpayer than that resulting from Stephen Dorrell's proposals.
MARCUS YOUNG Ely, Cambridgeshire

Sir: Thank you for your leading article. What a relieft My reaction to Mr Dorrell's plans had prompted the terrible thought, "If I am the only one who thinks that, am I already marching towards

My house is my insurance against future need. My children have a clear choice. Either they can belp to look after me if I become unable to do it for myself and inherit their reward, or I can pay someone else to do it and leave little behind. For a government supposed to believe in family values, encouraging them to opt out of family responsibilities and also to have expectations of something for nothing, seems a bit

BETTY PERRY Chelmsford Essex

Sir: No congratulations for your leading article of 11 March. Its comments are directed at a relatively well-off class of homeowners. Many home-owners are relatively poor, having struggled for years not for an investment but to keep a roof over their heads and their children, and to create not a "nest egg" hut a beloved nest. The culminating tragedy for them is being forced out of their homes by the absence of adequate, affordable home-care which would

Throughout the piece the word "house" is used almost exclusively in the brutal sense of an asset. A house can indeed be bought and sold, but a home can only be created with love and care, and it is the loss of this which is the real injustice and the cause of so much pain and unhappiness. MTS SHEILA MANN Leeds

allow them to remain in them.

Tortoise and hare

Sir. Your supplement on primary school league tables was illuminating. Who would have thought that among Bolton schools, Top-of-the-Brow would have been beaten by Plodder Lane? JONATHAN RIPLEY Tonbridge, Kent



Parties rescued a VAT absurdity

Sir: How exquisitely timed your leading article "The main parties need a deeper shade of green" is (12 March). On your news pages you report a heavy defeat for a backbench amendment to the Finance Bill, an amendment that would have - in the words of former Chancellor Norman: Lamont in his 1993 Budget speech

removed "an anomaly which makes a nonsense of any attempt to use the tax system to assist the environment".

The anomaly in question is the patent absurdity of charging VAT on energy conservation materials at 17.5 per cent whilst levying it at 8 per cent on energy consumption. What is so depressing is that both Conservative and Labour front benches colluded to stop this distortion being rectified. ANDREW WARREN Director, Association for the Conservation of Energy London NI

Sir: Your leading article was a welcome challenge to the mainstream grey parties to address the real problems afflicting us today. But what a pity that you continue to propagate the myth that the Green Party is a "single

issue" party.
The Greens recognise that a healthy environment, economic and social justice, and a true democracy are interconnected. That is why we advocate a phased restructuring of the taxation system to shift the burden from labour to pollution and resource use; a basic income scheme for all, demolishing the poverty trap; and a

strengthening of democracy and personal freedom through such measures as proportional representation, a Freedom of Information Act and a Bill of

Rights. Hardly single issue!
I suggest that it is the grey parties who are "single issue". Their damaging reliance on "economic growth" as a solution to all list will inevitably perpetuate a widening gap between rich and poor, greater environmental destruction and ultimately a lower quality of life. Southampton Green Party

Attlee was a true socialist

Sir: Some facts about the Attlee family show a rather different picture from that given by Kate Watson-Smyth ("Attlee was really a Tory, says his daughter-in-law".

Clement Attlee's father had been a Liberal supporter. Clem was introduced to socialism by his brother Tom, who had preceded him to the East End of London. The two brothers worked together there from 1907 and had the sympathy of their sisters, Mary and Margaret

Tom was a life-long member of the Labour Party, his son Christopher stood as a Labour candidate in 1951, 1955 and 1959 and his granddaughter Catherine in 1992. Other members of the family have been Labour councillors. Clem was not a lone Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056;

socialist in the family. Nor, in view of his government's record or of his support, for instance, of the International Brigade in Spain. could it possibly be argued credibly that he was "secretly a Tory". PEGGY ATTLEE London NW3

Murdoch and digital television

Sir: Polly Toynbee's article about digital terrestrial television and the BBC ("A naive fish in very dangerous waters." 10 March) was full of misconceptions. Here are

four.

I. To suggest that switching off analogue ten or more years hence is some drastic event is nonsense. This will only happen if by then the vast majority of the public have chosen to buy digital televisions when replacing current televisions. In the meantime analogue televisions will continue to receive

existing channels for years to come. 2. It is wrong to claim that everyone will have to buy into the digital age with a new black box": digital television sets will also be available. Neither set-top boxes nor digital televisions will be controlled by one private company as the article suggests. Both of them will be manufactured by many different companies and both will make the free digital services available to viewers as well as subscription channels. And, in the digital age, access for subscription services will be rigorously regulated.

e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

 Her claim that "Murdoch" will control digital relevision if British Digital Broadcasting's application s successful is mistaken. "Murdoch" does not own BSkyB. BSkyB does not control British Digital Broadcasting. It has one third of the venture along with Carlton and Granada.

does not propose to use "Murdoch's terrestrial box". We will support a separate box serving our own customers with our own independent subscriber management service and smart card. To avoid confusing customers this box will also be able to receive digital satellite as well as digital terrestrial channels. This is a good

4. British Digital Broadcasting

NIGEL WALMSLEY Director British Digital Broadcasting London SWI

A community unable to care

Sir. The case of Martin Mursell "Professional failures that led to a family (ragedy", 8 March) shows for a lie this government's rhetoric about "care in the community", because the community does not care. This is not because the community is uncaring, but because the Government has stretched the resources of health authorities, social services and housing services to the point where they cannot dedicate sufficient

time to each case nor co-ordinate

their efforts so as to ensure that no gaps are left through which the least fortunate may fall. I was in the same psychiatric hospital unit as Martin Mursell,

although not at the same time, and upon my release I came to terms with my mental health disability with only the belp of loving and supportive friends and the sympathetic reaction of neighbours and employers. These people are representative of the community at large, but the official community services were no help at all, despite the obvious and sincere goodwill of the beleaguered practitioners who struggle to help those in need. EAMONN OTTERNEY London NI

Algebra no joke Sir: It is a pity that you see fit to

snigger on your front page at a "piece of algebra" produced by a statistician to identify unusually high numbers of false alarms (report, 12 March). The equation you display could be used (and in broad terms understood) by many 16-year-olds if only the ideas and notation employed were properly explained.

If you lowered the level of discussion on your sports or husiness or arts pages so that they could be understood by those absolutely ignorant of such matters, you would rapidly lose custom. Why not raise your treatment of mathematics and statistics to recognise that many readers can appreciate averages and square roots when they see

NICHOLAS COX Department of Geography University of Durham

They deserve Dawkins diatribe

Sir: Some of your correspondents (Letters, 11, 13 March) have clearly been annoyed by Richard Dawkins's intemperate diatribe (8 March) against woolly thinking in the name of religion (or anything else). I could understand their annoyance if Professor Dawkins had expressed himself contemptuous of people merely for possessing religious faith, but I do not think he did,

Actually, are we not entitled to be just a little bit contemptuous of people, however eminent in their own fields, who allow themselves to he inveigled into pontificating in public about something they know very little abour? Especially if it involves telling other people, some thought quite hard about the issue. how to behave? Professor TJ PEDLEY Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge

Sir: As a scientific officer working in the public domain I must acknowledge the Rev Ian Kenway's assertion (letter, 1) March that I bear a responsibility to account for

my activities.

I certainly would not wish to pontificate on questions of the philosophy of science or the writings of C P Snow, since I have had formal training in neither. However subscribing to an ancient, ill-defined and shifting set of metaphysical values linsert the progressive religion of your choice) or a set of ancient immutable dogmatic misconceptions (insert the fundamentalist religion of your choice) does not qualify one for

such a task either.

My understanding of Professor Dawkins's argument was that there is a media circus that feels obliged to recruit not one, but several spokesmen for the many cults and religions that clutter our modern culture. The consequence is that the transmission of clear, testable scientific information is obscured by sheer weight of numbers. It seems to me entirely appropriate that an individual like Professor Dawkins, charged with the responsibility of enhancing the public understanding of science. should highlight this folly.
GRTAYLOR PhD MRCPath

Lunar irony

Sir: At about the time we received pictures of the Moon landings, a story was running about a woman aged over fill in South Africa who had given birth to a bahy.

I was working in a Lundon hospital and on the ward was an older nursing auxiliary, unable to have children, who firmly rejected the former story as a scam "all done with mirrors" and ardently believed in the latter, as it gave her hope. We nurses, who knew better, scoffed.

Ironic, that since then, doubt has been east on those pictures (letters. 7, 13 March) and a woman in her 60s has had a baby. All these years later. I feel I owe her an apology. KATE DAVIDSON Cherisey, Surrey

Eurofudge

Sir: At last, some good news from Europe! "Bundesbank admits EMU fudge possible" (headline, 12 March), Can you tell us where it will be on sale and whether it will he subject to VAT and guaranteed free from salmonella? **GEOFFREY HEATH** High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

t may yet go down as one of the shortest-lived

leam of ministers had officially

Outside in the streets of

had disintegrated into dust.

armed rebellion that has swept across the country closer to its inexorable conclusion: the overthrow of all remaining state

authority and the ousting of

lectuals begging them to lay down their arms, no heed even

to their own provisional com-

manders, who have tried to

impose order in the southern strongholds they have seized

into anarchy. Mr Fino remarked

as he took over his meaningless new mantle of power: "God save us, God save Albania." The events of the past few

weeks - from the collapse of Albania's fraudulent "pyramid"

investment schemes, to riots, to armed insurrection teetering

on the hrink of civil war - have

come as a shock to an outside world that had given little thought to this most remote and mysterious of European

countries. Mostly, Albania had not featured on the radar

screens of Western govern-

ments: to the extent that it had, it was vaguely assumed to be doing a reasonable job of

emerging from 50 years of

the ideal circumstance for West-

ern policy-makers to play a

rapid game of catch-up. Indeed.

to match the confusion of the

has been an extraordinary

plethora of interpretations in

the media, ranging from the cau-

tious to the downright barmy.

the highly polarised and per-sonalised ideological battle

being waged on the pages of

British and American newspa-

pers between rival camps of

academic specialists on the

Balkans. Reading the competing

The mob paid no heed to the new government's call to order, no heed to the Albanian intel-

President Sali Berisha.



Shadowed by anarchy: as authority collapses, shocked Western commentators argue with each other about the causes of the crisis

Photograph: Alex Majoli/Magnum

'God save us. God save Albania'

depressing, partly because it reveals the limited vision of many of the players, but mostly because it makes the job of understanding Albania 10 times

totalitarian nightmare into the democratic light of day. A state of political, social and economic collapse is hardly Broadly speaking, there are two schools of thought on the origins of the present crisis. The first. mistakenly referred to by its detractors as the "left-wing" view but sbared in most particsituation in Albania itself, there ulars by independent analysts, including this newspaper, is that President Berisha boodwinked the world into believing be was a democrat while evolv-Perhaps most extraordinary is

ing into a dangerous despot. Political repression went band-in-hand with rampant state corruption and a flourishing of crime rackets that were not only tolerated, but to a large degree also organised by the ruling order. The president tried to dispatches in this battle is buy his people's support with the

While armed mobs roam the streets of Tirana, uncontrolled even by the insurrection's leaders, confusion and conflict reigns among Western analysts and policy-makers, says Andrew Gumbel pyramid investment schemes, which in turn were propped up by the profits from the illegal arms and drugs traffic. When the schemes collarsed popular operating through the mafia and the schemes collarsed popular operating through the mafia and stabilising the currency. The media and stabilising the currency. Of economic life.

Week that read: "The media and stabilising the currency. Of economic life.

But while the West felt its Afar greater revenue source, own interests were being well own interests were being well own interests were being well only attacked in the accompanying piece, James of stabilising the currency. Of economic life.

But while the West felt its Afar greater revenue source, own interests were being well only interest were being well only interest. Advision whitehale finaled a

anger at the regime knew no bounds, and, in short order, army depots were looted, popular revolutionary councils sprang up and the march on Tirana became unstoppable.

The other view, espoused until recently by Western embassies and still championed by a small group of Thatcherite ideologues and right-wing news-papers, is that Mr Berisha is a much-misunderstood man, a

the main opposition party, the Socialists. Reports of electoral fraud were exaggerated by Communist propaganda, as were allegations of government collusion in organised crime. The pyramid schemes were an unfortunate side-effect of free-market capitalism, and their existence a sign of the weakness of the government's hold on Albanian society. not its authoritarian strength.

hut was deliberately stirred up and organised by criminals backed by the Socialist party. Much of the dehate surrounding these diametrically opposed positions has been marred by conspiratorial thinking, the more polarised writers on the left tending to credit President Berisha with an evil omnipotence, and the right doing exactly the same thing with the Socialist-led opposition. Worse still, some British writers have taken to accusing each other of fomenting anarchy in Albania. The Sunday Telegraph ran a headline this

The armed insurrection has

nothing to do with popular anger

the accompanying piece, James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers, promptly threw a slew of accusations back at the author, Anthony Daniels, some of which found their way into The Guardian on Monday.

itself, not on the various axes being ground around academic corridors. There was undoubtedly a terrible misreading of Albania by Western governments after the fall of Communism in 1990-91. The World Bank went so far as to characterise Albania as a "small haven of peace and economic growth" - a phrase that must be haunting the authors of the report in which it appeared. President Berisha and his government were showered with development aid as a reward for maintaining stability in their corner of an otherwise turbulent Balkans. And they were widely praised for liberalising the economy at great speed, opening the country to foreign markets, containing inflation

cratic, showing ever scanter respect for the institutions of the state, conducting purges of public officials, especially in the judiciary, denying the opposition and the independent press their fundamental rights, as learly, the debate should guaranteed under the constitution and alienating many of its be focused on Albania supporters, who either switched

to the opposition or left the country. Economically, all was not well either. It is true that the country recovered rapidly from the post-Communist collapse of 1991-92, eradicating chronic food shortages with belp from the Italian army and opening the Albanian market to a welter of Western consumer goods. It is also true that, with the help of the IMF and other organisations, the lek was stabilised and inflation brought under control.

But the nature of Albania's economic growth was suspect from a very early stage. The bulk of its legitimate income derived not from production.

abroad (estimated at up to \$500m a year) and foreign aid. Serious foreign investment failed to get off the ground because of the clientelistic

nature of the government;

which appeared reluctant to

reliminish control over any area

duit for the smuggling of arms and drugs, and during the war in Bosnia it was used for the transit of petrol to Serbia and Montenegro, in contravention of UN sanctions. The port of Vlora has lived handsomely for the past two years on the transport of illegal immigrants from the Balkans and Asia across the Adriatic to Italy. Western intelligence officials believe that this criminal revenue is at the origin of the pyramid investment schemes and helped to keep them going far longer than mathematical logic would

Foreign governments began to express concern about these issues only in the wake of the May 1996 elections, which were boycotted in midstream by the opposition and denounced as invalid by the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Enrope and others because of widespread vote-rigging and intimidation. Two days after the first round of voting, the diplobut from remittances sent matic community and the home by Albanians working world's media had ringside seats help Albania.

on the balcomy of the Tirana International hotel as police brutally broke up an opposition demonstration just outside in Skanderbeg Square, beating a number of prominent opposition leaders and hauling them off into custody for several hours.

he reaction to such bla-tantly undemocratic behaviour was hardly instantaneous. Indeed, European countries went ahead and recognised the new parliament, arguing that it was better to exert entle pressure on Mr Berisha than risk alienating him through noisy protest. As a result, the ruling Democratic Party reckoned it had got away scot-free and felt bold enough to cock a snook at both the US, which called for the elections to be held again, and the IMF, which suspended its credit programme because of the government's refusal to close down the pyramid schemes.

The tragedy that has un-folded since the collapse of the schemes has shown up not only the strength of popular feeling against the government, but also the inability of anybody to control the forces that have been unleashed by the uprising: Anyone who has been to the chaotic south of Albania, where the revolt has been in full swing for more than a week, knows that accusations of Communistinspired plots to overthrow the state are preposterous, just as anyone currently in Tirana. would laugh at the notion that Mr Berisha is some kind of all: powerful evil genius manipu-lating the whole thing for his

And yet these are the sorts of analyses finding their way into serious newspapers. On Tuesday, The Wall Street Journal published a leading article breathtaking for its sheer ignorance and Ideological invec-: tive. It asserted there were "nocredible claims of ballot-box stuffing" at last May's elections, even though the OSCE report referred to them clearly: And it described Mr Berisha as

a medical man, "not a Communist apparatchik", even though he was a secretary of the old Party of Labour for morethan 20 years and served as a cardiologist in Enver Hoxha's jealously guarded inner circle.

Admittedly, the Oxford group of Thatcherite acade

mics is rather more intelligent in its analyses. Mark Almond, a. lecturer in Balkan history, is no. doubt right to argue that the: Albanian government has become weaker than the mafia rackets operating in the country, and right to warn of the dangers of a Socialist party takeover without democratic guarantees:

But the ability of Mr Berisha's Western's admirers to absolve their hero of all blame for the Albanian disaster is uncanny. Mf. Berisha has been described as. "the last Thatcherite" - adored. for ideological reasons by a. clutch of right-wing thinkers. Unfortunately, much of the adulation heaped upon him has been offered unthinkingly and irresponsibly. It is time for the apologists to swallow their pride and admit they were wrong, for the sake of a clear-eyed understanding of what can be done to-



NO contracts and NO monthly bills ever!

your messages

AVAILABLE FROM: ARGOS. SELECTEO CURRYS SUPERSTORES, DIXONS. JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP, TALKLAND, TANDY. THE LINK, PEOPLES PHONE SHOWROOMS. INDEX. SELECTEO POST OFFICES AND PAGEDNE AUTHORISED DEALERS For further information FreeCall 0500 505 505

Mr Howard and the incredible prison hulk

s Mr Michael Howard continues in his bid to put all potential voters behind bars before the election, it turns out that he has already occupied all available space on land. So Mr Howard has imported a floating prison from America tn be moored off Portsmouth and help to absorb our surplus prison population. It seems likely that this

will involve Mr Michael Howard in further legal problems, and further clashes with the judiciary, so to explain all the legal niceties of this new move by Mr Michael Howard, I have secured the services of Julius Martello OC, an expert both on marine law and megalomania, to answer some of your questions on this exciting new development in Britain's naval heritage.

It seems to me that Mr Howard is just taking us back to the grim Victorian days of the floating hulks, and I wonder if it is in Mr Howard's mind to go even further back and start sending other prisoners overseas to serve their sentences in Australia: Julius Martello QC writes: instance, the governor of the

us be serious for a little while. A moment's thought will show you that even Mr Michael Howard would not send prisoners to Australia to carry out their sentences. This is because Australia is now a sovereign power and would not accept them. My understanding is that Mr Michael Howard is seriously considering sending our prisoners overseas to somewhere like the Falklands, or Gibraltar or ... no. that's it. To the Falklands or Gibraltar

Very funny, I am sure, but let

Won't the inhabitants be up in arms? Julius Martello QC writes: Very possibly. But as they do not have a vote in the election, I do not suppose that will worry Mr Michael Howard. This new prison ship due to

Or maybe St Helena. There's

a precedent, after all.

be unchored off Portsmouth, will it be subject to maritime Julius Martellu QC writes:

Undoubtedly. It will become the first prison in Britain which will be, from a legal point of view, part of our merchant navy. Does this mean that, for



Miles Kington

prison will be the equivalent of a ship's captain and will be empowered to marry prisoners?

Julius Martello QC writes: I think it would be very unwise for a prison governor to marry a prisoner. Especially if be were married already.

No, what I meant was - oh. never mind. But one thing that springs to mind is that all sear going vessels must have adequate emergency routines and regular life-boat drill. On the other hand, prisoners are usually left locked up in their cells for most of the day. How

can these two be reconciled?

maritime law to confine passengers to their quarters, for fear of their drowning in

an emergency?
Julius Martello QC writes: Normally speaking, yes. But I gather Mr Michael Howard is of the opinion that a drowned prisoner is a prisoner who will not reoffend. There is also a plan to have the prison ship surrounded by armed guards in rowing boats to prevent

And to shoot anyone who

Julius Martello QC writes: Well, I am not sure of that But very possibly Mr Michael Howard may be of the opinion that a shot, drowned prisoner is even less likely to reoffend.

It has been forecast on all sides that the more prisoners Mr Michael Howard tries to cram into jail, the more likely there is to be some sort of explosion of anger. Now, the usual result of a prison revolt is a roof-top demonstration, but in the case of HMS Hulk. it is quite likely that the lads will take over the prison ship AND TAKE IT OUT TO SEA! Now, once they have gone past the three-mile limit.

could they not re-register the boat as an independent state and apply for membership of the United Nations? Julius Martello QC writes: Hmm. I suppose

theoretically it is possible although it might be construed also as piracy.
Say, for instance, that Mr el Howard himself decided to visit the floating prison. Sounds unlikely that he would visit a prison, but let's say so. Let's say that while he is on board the floating prison there is a takeover by the prisoners and the ship is taken out to sea. Let's say that the new crew of the FIMS Hulk decide to have a democratic

trial of Mr Michael Howard and after a fair hearing - there will, after all, be a few solicitors and barristers among the prisoners - he is ... condemned to walk the plank. Let's say that as Mr Michael Howard is dragged to the plank weeping and screaming and begging for the mercy he never showed anyone else

Sadly, that is all we have time for. But rest assured that Julius Martello QC will be back soon to answer more of your sea-tinged legal questions

حكة امن الأصل

Consumers are fed up with being fed Whitehall rubbish

orget about the party pol-ities for a moment. Douglas Hogg's weekly tor-ment at the dispatch box, the relentless revelations of the secretiveness and incompetence at the Ministry of Agriculture, the mightly and gruesomely important television images of excrement encrusted cows, reflect something much bigger; an irreversible change in culture. The discovery of Bill Swann's report on the filthy condition of the country's abattoirs was something much more impor-tant that an embarrassment for a moribund Government. It may not be too millennial to say we are now seeing, in at least one segment of national life, the beginning a transition from an age of producerism to an age of

It is apt to say that Swann's report was discovered over the dead body of the Ministry of Agriculture. It's all over for Maff, at least in its present form. It is pointless to rant on about the culture inbred in the only department to sponsor a single industry, or network of industries. In which civil servants and veterinary scientists pass as a matter of course to and from jobs in the department and the companies they regulate. In which a minister can say, withont irony, as Lord Lucas, agriculture spokesman in the Lords did on Wednesday, that on food safety it proceeds on the basis of co-operation with the industry. It did not, he added, "take a big stick to it and close down everything that was unsatisfactory. Had we done so we would have closed down two thirds of the

"This is excrement and urine in your hamburger we're talking about." Nor is this the lament of a New Age foodie: remember, 20 people have died of E coli in Lanarkshire.

The Meat Hygiene Service, the agency which is at the heart of Hogg's travails, has had a short and unhappy history. The Commons Standing Committee records of the debate when it was set up in April 1995 already read like something from a bygone age. The decision to remove the job of abattor regulation from local authorities and hand it to a nationwide agency was opposed by Labour. But this was mainly over the one issue which dominated the proceedings of the committee: the costs to industry that would accrue from the new service. To his credit, Labour's Eddie O' Hara warned prophetically of the danger under the new system of "cross-contamination and consequent food poisoning". He pointed out that it had been the local anthorities who had been most concerned about the possible - but at the time officially dismissed - risks of BSE. But even his speech was largely taken up with the anger of meat wholesalers who feared being driven out of business by the excessive costs they would have to pay to be inspected. That couldn't happen now.

Maria in A

25 37

AMERICA

TED.

21.5

. What's more, the service had a rather unpromising start. Even most of the experts have forgotten that its first head of operations, Philip Corrigan, a vet with an international academic reputation, was found to have left his native Australia under a bit of a cloud - namely six disciplinary charges under the Australian Public Services Act, including a complaint alleging that he had solicited a grant from the Australian Cold Storage Association to finance a trip to an international conference in Berlin. He left, but only after his troubles in Australia coming back.



Donald Macintyre

A revolution is taking place that will end for ever the food producers' stranglehold on the Ministry of Agriculture

had been unearthed by the Liberal Democrat agriculture spokesman Paul Tyler and The Independent. Small beer no doubt, but the point is that the Ministry of Agriculture admitted they knew that Mr Corrigan had had a problem in Australia when they appointed him. An insouciance which surely speaks volumes about the incestuous relationship the ministry expects its officials to enjoy with the industries they are supposed to monitor.
This is nicely illustrated, as it happens, by a glossy publication called Functions of the Meat

Hygiene Service, which the ministry helpfully issued on Wednesday. Given the depart-ment's instincts for suppres-sion, it was rather surprising that it was put out at all. For it could hardly be a more graphic illus-tration of what is wrong. There are lots of pictures of carnestlooking folk in spotless white coats examining carcasses in gleaning establishments of the sort Swann, for one, would not recognise. In a list of its "per-formance targets", "applying hygiene requirements" comes seventh out of nine, behind three on financial performance. one on BSE, and one on anima welfare. But the best bits are the glowing encomia - dropped into the main text - from the big beasts of the food producer jungle: the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers is enraptured with the "positive and responsive" way the service has met "recent demands". From whom it does not say. And then the International Meat Traders' Association is thrilled with the

industry on day one." There is "excellent service and total coyet to be a single prosecution for hygiene operation" it has received from the chief execbreaches of the kind so brutally exposed by the
Swann report. And, as Shella McKechnie,
director of the Consumers' Association, said:

The MHS still has, of course, would be

if the quote had said: "The MHS and its chief executive have been an utter pain in the neck, snooping at everything we do, enforcing all sorts of footling restrictions and being paranoid about the odd cow with diarrhoea

It's a safeish bet that this will be the last report of its kind from the MHS. It may be that Maff will imp on, as Labour currently intends, with another agency, whether answerable to the Department of Health or not, taking care of food safety. There is no reason why Maif's green functions should not be hived off to Environment, and its European subsidy negotiations to the DTI (a department crowded with ministers with too little to do). Some food standards campaigners believe it should be reformed wholesale rather than dismembered. But others including Sheila McKechnie, believe it should be abolished if only to eliminate the corrosive culture of a department which saw its role as protecting not just farm-ers but meat wholesalers, renderers, abattoir operators and the whole panoply of industries now caught in the headlights.

This change will be painfully slow. There may be more revelations to come. The intimidation of meat inspectors at abattoirs won't stop overnight. The problems of the poultry industry have so far escaped attention. But something has snapped. It no longer seems possible that Edwina Currie could face the lynch mob which ended her ministerial career over salmonella. It no longer seems possible that Mrs Thatcher could say, as she once did when asked whether Maff bad outlived it's usefulness: "You don't see: farmers are consumers too." The stranglehold the big producers have had over those who buy and sell their food is loosening daily. And it won't be

Racist table talk of Middle England

take it that no readers of this newspaper, or any other newspaper for that matter ever make or hear anyone else making racist remarks. That is why Paul Watson's television documentary, The Dinner Pany, in which "the most notorious dinner guests in the country" sit around happily mouthing off about queers and immigrants and "Black Rasta-farian Africans", is deemed

هكذا من الأصل

newsworthy.

A week after David Evans felt free to lecture school chil-dren on the subject of "black bastards", we have yet more evidence that the heart of darkness is located in that mythical land, Middle England, actually this time rural Suffolk. Out there in the shires, or maybe in the council estates of our cities, there is that evil thing called racism. Where we live, however, everything is harmonious beyond belief, a regular little

Ebony and Ivory simation.

Who are we kidding? And what are we trying to prove?

That other people are bigots, stupid enough to let themselves be filmed spouting their true blue prejudices, while we. the whiter-than-white, look on with disdain. Or are we glad that these views are expressed publicly because then we know what we are up against, we know who the enemy is, where the racists are? If this is the case, then is the enemy senior judges referring to hard workers as "people who work like niggers"? Is it the police involved in the Stephen Lawrence case? Is it those in the Tory party who want to turn immigration into an elec-

These are confusing times.

The Daily Mail is prepared to
name those it claims killed
Stephen Lawrence yet it also
supports Nicholas Budgen's view that the relaxing of immigration controls is a legitimate subject of debate. John Major has said that be will not play "the race card" and Tony Blair has congratulated him for it There are those who would argue that the discussion of racist, yet the playing of "the race card" can only be mean-ingful if we all assume that we are playing it into the bands of an implicitly racist electorate. The Daily Telegraph can

conjure up the spectacle of hordes poised to enter the country, "half a million people every five years"; Budgen defends his position by claiming that the majority of Asians themselves think our immigration polices are too lenient. He cites the Asian doctor who has no reason to want more Punjabi labourers brought in. The Mail, naturally, admires Asian immigrants, particularly "their respect for education, the law and family values". Admining them is not the same as wanting more of them, is it? Budgen talks of the number of black riots" in Brixton, Bristol and Wolverhampton, Incredibly, he tells us that there has been "no white rioting against the Black and Asian



White people should stop feigning horror when the 'secret racism' of so-called polite society is exposed

population. The white community has expressed its view through the ballot box."

One doesn't have to be a lily-livered liberal to find the subtext to all this guff, and it is as undeniably racist as wit-terings of a few drunken halfwits over dinner. The difference is that all public speech now has to start with a declaration of anti-racism before it goes on to parade in the crassest way possible a series of stereotypes based oo igno-

rance and fear. Of course as, Linda Bellos pointed out in these pages earier this week, things are improving and there are a few signs that the "politics of race" are being discussed in more intelligent ways. Professor Patricia Williams, deliverer of the Reith Lectures, despite her demonisation as a PC zealot,

"colour-blindness". Bellos also mentioned the handling of the discovery of the HMS London, which contained the remains of manacled slaves. She praised the lack of denial of the facts about the slave trade.

We could also talk of the sensitive handling of issues of race in much of the Comic Relief coverage or the attitudes expressed in opinion polls by young people that continue to highlight racism as a serious ill. Bellos's point though, was clear - that progress can only be made when black people themselves speak out and are listened to.

Yet the ways in which race is spoken about are so roundabout that we are shocked when faced with overt racism. All the poring over league tables, the scurrying between one school and another, has a lot to do with

means students from ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented in the profession.

l am not suggesting a return to a kind of politics of guilt where everyone has to locate their own inner racist. However, continually to position racist attitudes as either belonging to a group of unsavoury individuals or merely the social lubricant of many big organi-sations does not get us very far. As "trust" is supposed to be

one of the big ideas, one has to tackle the distrust by many black people of so many key institutions - the police, schools, the media, to name but three. The championing of the Lawrences sent out a longawaited message that white society did care about the murder of a young black man. Yet while once again we are fixated on the hanality of racism dis-played in Paul Watson's film, three members of Combat 18-18 stands for the position of Adolf Hitler's initials in the alphabet - received sentences of only 12 to 17 months for their activities. This included the publication of a hit list, of people to be punished alongside detailed instructions on how to make bombs. The list included Sharon Davies; her crime is her marriage to a black man.

If polite society is as truly anti-racist as we like to pretend then we should be up in arms about this. Remember this is an organisation whose main aim is to "ship all non-whites back to Africa, Asia, Arabia, alive or in body bags, the choice is theirs". Instead, however, we ache to witness the horrible spectacle of both parties rushing around after the ethnic vote, patronising "ethnic minorities" left. right and centre.

Those prepared to play the race card may appear not to be playing with a full deck, but as long as we do not make them show their hands then they will continue to bluff us. If we were able to talk openly about racism instead of having to deny its presence, the race card would not have the currency it has. As many of the remarks of recent some may be a dirty secret; but to others it is part of a shared world view. We have found out nothing from the remarks of David Evans or the guests at The Dinner Party that we did not know already. As the "secret racism" of so many respectable players is exposed, then white people dutifully feign borror at a secret that black people have been telling us about for some time, if we had listened to

to talk shout it. The absence of black faces in public life is often

put down to something called "institutional racism" which

means that individuals are let

off the hook, yet how does insti-

tutional racism come about

except by discrimination that is

practised at times by individu-

als? The Society of Black

Lawyers has complained this

week about "an appalling level

of unequal treatment which

race, but try getting your aver-age middle-class "anti-racist" turns out 10 bave some inter-Recent comparisons show that esting things to say about over 50.

The Europhobes who threaten Britain

hen asking us to give sym-pathetic consideration to the possibility of withdraw. ing from the European Union, Eurosceptics are less than frank about what this might mean. They suggest that an independent Britain could remain on good terms with the Union, each going its own separate way. This is widely optimistic. More likely, relations between the two would be implacably hostile, for the last thing Brussels would want to see is an independent Britain doing well, since that would tempt other members down the same path. Independent Britain's success would be a permanent challenge to the European Union, inviting dreams of secession in their ranks, and the Union's success a permanent challenge to Britain, promoting federalist heresies in ours. Federal Europe and independent Britain, like it or not, would be locked in a protracted conflict, a kind of Napoleonic Cold War. Either their success would be the end of us or our soccess would be the end of them. Without a shot being fired it would a war to the death. Even if Britain won, however, and remained an independent nation state. I doubt if the kind of society

which emerged would be one in which any civilised lory would want

10 live, for the degree of nationalist fervour a Euro-sceptic government

would have to whip up to win the

referendum getting. Britain out of Europe would be as nothing to that



Peregrine Worsthorne in his Spectator column, reprinted here, warns of the consequences of a Cold War with Europe

required to mobilise the British people behind a long Cold War struggle gainst Europe. Conceivably, Rupert Murdoch willing, this necessary degree of nationalistic fervour could be sustained at the grass-roots, but certainly not among the educated cosmopolitan élites, great swathes of whom - judging by their present attitudes - would be supporting the federalist enemy.

How much tolerance would a Europhobic government - for that is what, as the struggle proceeded, it would be likely to become - show to them? During the Napoleonic wars "Napoleonists" like the Whig leader Charles James Fox - the 18th century's equivalent of Roy Jenkins - did get away with virtual treason, as many Jacohites, privately drinking to the King over the water, had before them. But 20th-century nationalism is made of sterner, more thuggish stuff and it is difficult to imagine potential fifth columnists like Lord Jenkins and, even more so, Sir Edward Heath, receiving the same kid-glove and gentlemanly treatment - not at any rate if that splendid bruiser Norman Tebbit had anything

The climate would, I fear, soon have far too much for comfort in common with fin de siècle France, where right-wing intellectual fire-brands like Charles Mantras, founder in 1899 of Action Française, accused any Frenchman of treason whose ideas of La Papie differed from his

own. Already comparably dogmatic definitions of what it requires to be fully English — as against British — are beginning to be heard here. No journal as rabidly nationalistic as Action Française has yet hit the streets, but when it does I can think of several right-wing intellectuals among my friends who would be only too happy to contribute. Nor would this increasingly

nationalistic climate be dissipated once Britain had taken the plunge and decided to withdraw, for short of deporting Euro-enthusiasts and purging them wholesale from the public service - where their influence is very great - they would still be here, "the enemy to our midst", handy to take the blame ooce the pains of independence began to bite. In fin de siècle 19th-century France cosmopolitan Jews were the scapegoats. In fin de siècle 20th-ceotury England it would be cosmopolitan Euro-enthusiasts.

That would not be the worst of it. For the radical right would oot be the only lot of ruthless ruffians eager to climb aboard the patriotic bandwagon in the hope of steering it in their direction. Equally eager would be the radical left, as they were during the Second World War. Theo the "Guilty Men", excoriated by Michael Foot in his famous Gollaocz special of that name, were the Establishment appeasers of Berlin; this time, some contemporary Michael Foot, Paul perhaps, would put the boot into the Establishment appeasers of Brussels. Then it was only the radical left which used patriousm as a cover under which to prosecute the class war. Now that ploy would be used by both the radical right and the radical left. Not only would the Daily Mirror bave plenty of opportunity to peddle its kind of anti-Establishment poison but so, needless to say, would The Sun. Between them everything which makes Old Britain agreeable and civilised - monarchy, Church, social hierarchy, high culture - would be ground into the dust and everything that makes New Britain odious Union Jack-waving football fans, the tabloid press, philistine populism greatly strengthened.

There is always a high price to pay for mobilising the masses, as the Tories discovered after both great wars, nooe more so than Winston Churchill, whose humiliating dismissal in 1945 was very much part of that price. Having patriotically done their best for the country, the people understandably expect their country in return to do its best for them. So it would be even if Britain came out on top in the struggle with the European Union. She would emerge from it with her governing institutions - the very things which the Tory party came into existence to protect discredited and the masses triumpbant and vengeful. To heat Hitler, that was a price just about worth paying, but not surely to heat M Santer or eveo Chancellor Kohl.

If you are over 50 and want to save money on vour home insurance, talk to Saga.

SAGA Home Insurance provides low cost home insurance for people aged

But don't take our word for it. Just compare these

Сотрану	Contents Premium
CIS	£138.60
Zurich Municipal	£119.15
Commercial Union	£79.46
AA Insurance Services	£64.95
SAGA SERVICES	£58.12

These prices based on £35,000 contents cover. for a 4 bedroom detached house in the South East

As you know, price is not everything. This is why SAGA Home Insurance provides comprehensive, tailor-made cover that is flexible to meet your individusl needs. Combined with first rate claims and customer service, it is no wonder that over 320,000 people insure their

> Call us today FREE and see how much you could save.

0800 414 525

Please quote reference ID3705 Lines are open 8.30am-7.00pm Monday-Friday



business & city

BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

NatWest counts the cost of £90m hole

Four suspended, £8m bonus cut as inquiry deepens

Michael Harrison

The mis-pricing in NatWest's interest rate options division is a "significant setback" for the bank and is likely to take several months to unravel fully, its chief executive Derek Wanless admitted yesterday.

The episode also evokes uncomfortable memories of the Blue Arrow affair, which led to the demise of County Nat West. the hank's previous attempt to become a serious player in io-

ternational capital markets. But Martin Owen, chief executive of Nat West Markets, said it would not blow it off course in its determination to become a glohal investment

Investigators from lawyers Linklaters and Paines and accountants Coopers and Lyhrand, are confident that the problems are restricted to the London arm of NatWest Markets' interest rate options business.

But they and seoior NatWest executives are perplexed that the mis-pricing could have remained undetected for so loog and by the precise motivation that lay behind the deception. There is no evidence of personal gain having been made except in so far as people wanted to keep their jobs by disguising

losses," said one source. Mr Wanless said it was "extremely regrettable" that the losses should have gooe undetected for so long and he conceded that the affair was "a significant setback" to the bank's attempts to build its reputation in the international

capital markets business. But he said he was satisfied that the mis-pricing was not evidence of a wider systemic probiem throughout NatWest markets. However, he said that there were urgent lessons to learn from the episode, which has resulted in the suspension of five senior employees and the docking of £8m in honuses from a handful of employees in the bank's global debt deriva-

tives division. The losses only came to light late last month and were initially expected to cost Nat West £50m. It now appears that the size of the hole is £90m although £13m of this is covered by an existing ployees with the number of provision and the withholding of the bonus payments.

Kyriacos Papouis, the options trader at the centre of the

affair, left the bank last year and hank Bear Sterns. NatWest is attempting to interview him as part of the investigation and has made several approaches through his lawyers, Kingsley

His immediate hoss, Neil Dodgson was already on suspension, pending the outcome of the internal inquiry. Yesterday a further four senior

staff were also suspended.
They are Mr Dodgson's superior, head of swaps options trading Ian Gaskell, a graduate trainee who joined the bank in 1983 and progressed to its swaps department in 1991.

Mr Gaskell in return reports to Jean François Nguyen, man-aging director of deht derivatives, who is also suspended. Mr Nguyen was brought in from Credit Suisse in 1991. Christophe Lanson, who also came from Credit Suisse and is global head of rate risk management - and as such the man responsible for the financial engineering of the options dealt in by the team of traders - has also been suspended.

The fifth staff member to be suspended is Phil Wise, now NatWest Markets chief administrative officer but senior managing director of the capital markets division for most of the time that the mis-pricing was

NatWest executives stressed yesterday that the suspensions should not be taken to indicate guilt or responsibility hut were designed to allow the individuals to co-operate fully with the continuing inquiry. As well as establishing that

the mis-pricing was not part of wider failures of cootrol within the bank, oo flaws had been ideotified in the models used by Nat West to price the options in which it trades.

NatWest said that the second stage of its review would concentrate on the management issues associated with its failure to detect the losses and the mis-

As an "act of leadership" Mr Oweo has volunteered to forgo £200,000 of his £500,000 bonus for last year.

However, the financial impact is much higger for other emstaff thought to be affected by the £8m bonus cut numbering

fewer than 10. Commeot, page 21





Trader's losses grew undetected for two years

To senior NatWest executives, the most alarming feature of the £90m bole that has appeared in its interest rate options ss is the fact that it remained undetected for more than two years.

It now emerges that losses had been building up in the book run by the young options trader Kyriacos Paponis since late 1994 and yet they were only uncovered in February this year, three days after the parent bank had announced profits of more than

In part that is due to the highly complex and esoteric nature of some of the financial instruments used in debt

derivatives trading.

In part it is due to the failure of management systems to identify that something was going wrong and tackle the source of the problem.

In part it was due, it now appears, to conscious efforts to obscure the losses through the mis-pricing of options and the transfer of value between trading books, which made it more difficult to detect the mis-pricing.

The mis-pricing only came to light after back-office staff at NatWest Markets - those responsible for reconciling trades oo a daily, weekly and monthly basis - began to question the values attached to certain options and the way those prices had been fixed. Martin Owen, chief executive of

NatWest Markets, says: "The losses came to light through the book revaluations and testing of methodologies that are carried out oo a regular basis. As we tightened our processes we

began to discover more." He does not believe there is evidence of any personal gain being made on the part of anyone. "Our continuing ion will, however, want to look now at the motivation behind these

∠ The mis-pricing only came to light after back-office staff began to question the values of options 🤊

For motivation, the bank might take o look at the remuneration which its traders can take home and the pressure under which they work. The £8m docked yesterday from the bonus pay-ments of a handful of high-flyers in NatWest's global debt derivatives business shows the scale of the rewards on

Traders regularly start work at seven in the morning, not finishing before six in the evening and sometimes much later if the trades they are exe-cuting involve Far East or US markets: NatWest Markets' interest rate op-

tions division occupies only a small part of the investment bank's headquarters in London's Bishopsgate bome to one of the biggest trading floors in Europe. The division employs about 70 people in London and a for-ther 80 overseas. And yet it is a key part of the bank's overall derivatives business, holding some very large positions out of the notional £260bn on options

held on NatWest's books. In essence an optioo is the right to buy or sell a property at a pre-determined price in the future. The huyer pays a premium for that right. In the case of interest rates it enables the buyer to fix or bedge their debt exposure on given currencies over given time periods. At its simplest it is like switching to a fixed-rate mortgage.

However, clients of NatWest Markets would be more likely to buy the options to trade their liabilities by, for instance, swapping their exposure to dollar interest rates in five years' time for deutschmark interest rates in three

Some of the options dealt in by Mr Papouis and the small team of options traders he worked with will have been of a fairly conventional nature, heavily traded on the capital markets. But some will have been more complex options involving a much higher degree of volatility, thus making the pricing

of them more subjective. In the main he would have been trading options with clients - gener-

The bank might take a look at the rewards its traders can take home and the pressure under which they work 9

tomers needing to hedge their interest rate exposure. But in addition, there would have been a small amount of proprietary trading using the bank's

What the independent investigators brought in by NatWest from accoun-

Linklaters and Paines discovered was regular mis-pricing to obscure losses in certain option books. To make these losses more difficult to detect, the value of options was transferred between books.

In no cases will customers of NatWest have suffered losses by buying the options since the mis-pricing relates to the value that was attached to them in the bank's own books.

The five employees so far sus-pended by NatWest Markets form a chain of command and supervision within its interest rate options area tarting with Mr Pa

Martin Owen, chief executive of NatWest Markets, stressed yesterday that the suspensions were not intende to imply guilt or wrongdoing on the part of anyone but were designed to enable the individuals to co-operate fully with the ongoing investigation. But senior NatWest sources doubt

that Mr Paponis could have mispriced the options he was trading in so systematically over such a long period on his own.
Investigators also believe that the

transfer of value between books points to a deliberate attempt to avoid detection as the net closed in.

Michael Harrison

Fall in inflation puts Spain in place for rate cut and EMU

The Bank of Spain is expected to cut interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point today after figures yesterday showed a sharp drop in inflation. The new inflation figures raise the chances of Spain meeting the Maastricht criteria and joining EMU while leaving Italy on the

The Spanish consumer price index fell by U.1 per cent during February, bringing the annual rate of inflation down to 2.5 per cent, compared to 2.9 per cent in the year to January. Julian Jessop of Nikko Europe said: "The markets were

uary of 2.7 per cent.

Maastricht inflation criterion in January on the basis of the EU harmonised inflation measure, the HCIP, which put Spanish inflation at 2.8 per cent, 0.1 of a percentage point lower than the national measure. The Maastricht Treaty says that inflation must not be more than 1.5 percentage points above that of the three best-performing countries, creating a ceiling in Jan-

But the inflation drop in February greatly increases Spain's chances of passing the inflation test to 1997. David Walton of Goldman Sachs said that if the ceiling remained excited by the inflation figures. roughly unchanged, and if the We expect the Bank of Spain to cut rates as soon as possible." EU harmonised measure followed the national CPI, then the

Source: FT Information

probability of Spain meeting the inflation criterion had risen from 73 to 96 per cent.

Falling inflation means that Spain has a better chance of meeting the other Maastricht criteria too, because it gives the Bank of Spain more leeway to cut interest rates. Julian Jessop of Nikko Europe said: "I don't think interest rates are being set to cootrol inflation. Spain is much more concerned about growth. Meeting the deficit and deht criteria are the problem."

Spain has lower borrowing. lower debt and higher growth than Italy, giving it a much better chance of meeting the Maastricht criteria this year. Goldman Sachs forecasis that Spain's deficit will be 3.4 per coot in 1997, compared with the

Maastricht 3 per cent limit. Mr Jessop said: "The Germans are less worried about Spain than Italy. Spain is a smaller economy, and would bring a much lower deht into EMU."

The prospect of Spain leap-frogging into EMU while EC

founder member Italy is left behind could cause diplomatic problems. However, Philip Chitty of ABN Amro maintains that the most likely scenario remains that both Italy and Spain are excluded in the first wave. "The Maastricht Treaty talks about sustainable low inflation. It iso't clear to me that either country has yet achieved this," Average earnings in Spain were rising 5 per cent a year and

there were serious inflationary

pressures in Spain and Italy.

INTEREST RATES

Sir Gerald Elliot, who has led

Salvesen shareholders

Magnus Grimond

A split betweeo private and institutional investors in Christian Salveseo opeoed vesterday after the board pushed through a controversial £100m special dividend at a hostile shareholders' meeting in Edinburgh.

The board, led by Sir Alick Rankin, chairman, was forced to put the proposed payment to a poli after around two-thirds of the 400 people attending the gathering, mainly individual investors, voted against on a show of hands. The final tally showed 69 per cent of the votes cast backing the management, with over three-quarters of the share capital thought to have been

a £300,000 campaign against the

dividend and related proposal to demerge the Aggreko gen-erator hire husiness, said he thought the private sharehold-ers were largely behind him. He expressed regret that institu-

tional investors, led by Morgan Stanley and PDFM, trad decided to support the company.
"I would like to see boards being more sensitive to the long-term interests of companies and less to the short-term concerns of institutions", he said. "What [the campaign] did bring out was the widespread

concern about the way the com-

pany has been run."

But he said he would not continue his crusade, which means the management should be able to push through the demerger unopposed at a second extraordinary meeting later this year.

CURRENCIES

Special dividend splits Granada backs away from bid for Yorkshire

Tom Stevenson City Editor

Granada threw its "phoney bid" for control of ITV neighbour Yorkshire Tyne-Tees into confusion yesterday after it apparently ruled itself out of launching a takeover offer for at least three months. Yorkshire's shares tumbled 117.5p to £11.62p, having dipped as low as £11.05p at one stage, as the long expected bid, an open secret in television circles, seemed to have been at ast put on hold.

The timing of an unexpected statement from Granada only 24 hours before today's announcement of full-year figures from United News & Media; another potential bidder for Yorkshire, added a further twist to what one analyst described as "an elaborate poker game". Granada denied it was talking Yorkshire's price lower to secure a cheaper takeover price.
Its statement followed bot on

the beels of remarks earlier this week from Yorkshire chairman, Ward Thomas, that any bid for the company would have to be mitched at £17 a share or more to succeed. Granada has expressed privately that paying more than £13.20 a share would result

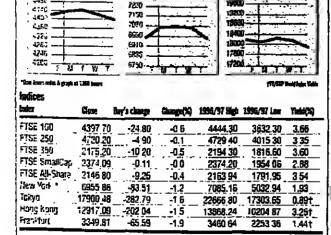
Although the statement was worded in a way that the Take-over Panel might normally insist precluded a bid for at least three

Granada's statement ran: "Reports of the possibility of Granada making an offer for Yorkshire at or above the current share price are misplaced: Granada confirms that, unless there is a material change in Yorkshire's circumstances (including an offer from a third party), it has no current intention of making an offer for Yorkshire."

Analysts said that wording, almost certainly cleared with the Takeover Panel, would allow Granada to return if United News & Media or any other television company were to lannch a bid United, which owns 14 per cent of Yorkshire compared with Granada's 27 per tent holding, also owns warrants, which if exercised could take its stake above 18 per cent.

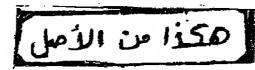
Speculation also surrounded. Yorkshire's intentions towards Laser, the advertising sales busi-ness owned by Granada which sells commercial slots for both its owner and Yorkshire. A mooted end to Laser's contract with Yorkshire would almost certainly be seen as a material change in Yorkshire's circumstances analysts said, and could be used as a pretext for a bid.

The statement went on to say "The current Yorkshire share in dilution of its own earnings. price already reflects not only a significant bid premium caused by continuing speculation, but also expectations of Substantial reduction in York months, it included caveats which shire's annual licence bid paranalysts said yesterday might men, realisation of which is far leave the door open for an offer. from certain."



STOCK MARKETS

6.44 6.34 5.32 6.26 6.20	W W				13 69 68 67 65		\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	151		11/11/	表验				
Todey Marke		'16	Boad Yie	ide *				the bisman	nis si ili by	t Poé a p	0 hers				
	t Month	1 Year	Andre Sc		Long Bo	d (%	Year Ngs	Posed	Tester day	Change	State Age	Dollar	Vesterie	Chands	her he
	6.00	6 66_	7.34	3,13	7 44	8	25	\$ (London)	1,5930		1,5234	£ (Londor			
	5,56	5.94	6.66		6 93	6	67	\$ (11 York):	1,6030		1,5235		± 0.6238		
	0.41	0.47	2.24	3 23_				DM (Londor			2.2422		on) 1.7014		1.47
Germany	3.28	3.38	571	6,57	6.50_			Y (London)	195,350	-Y0 252	160,414) 122,630		105.20
Textouri in	ices							£ Index	96.8		83.2	\$ Laplex	: 104.2		
		MA	IN PRIC	CE CHANGES							THER I	NDICATOR	9		
Rises	Price (a) Change (s	Dings's	Falls	Price (p)	رز جرست	% Change	-	Vesterally					st Yr Age	lied By
Cordiant	113.5	95	91	Yankshire 11	1162.5	117.5	9.2	Oil Brent \$	19.86	+0.25	18.92	RPi 1	54.4	- 146.0	
Und Biscurts	250	12.5	5.3	Moins	830	70	7.8	Gold S	352.55	-0.4	396.75		09.7+2.60		
Bunzi	232		47	De La Rue	592.5	24	3.9	Gold £	220.72	-0.84	268.44	Base Rates			
	_														÷





'How is he going to explain bonuses of more than £1m

earned on the back of bogus profits? How is he going to explain to his staff that a high street bank, a clearing bank for heaven's sake, could ever have

contemplated these

lottery-type payments?"

What will the branch manager say about this? respects than the time when Department of Trade and Industry inspectors

were sent into NatWest to investigate the Blue Arrow affair. That management controis at any City bank could be so loose as to expose it to catastrophic loss on this scale is bad enough; that it should happen to a high street bank with a jealously guarded reputation for prudence and probity makes it seem doubly worse. When rogue trading incidents of this type are confined to foreign or family-con-

trolled specialist City banks, it certainly makes a good story but its wider impact is generally limited. Indeed the suspicion is that much of the time these episodes go entirely unreported; when the bank is a partnership and the losses not life threatening, it is not hard to hide the incident in the general melange of complex derivative trading. The culpable traders are disciplined and fired (though not publicly), controls are tightened, and the ahip sails on as before with few people outside the bank any the wiser. It could well be that these things are more common than generally

things are more common man generally thought.

But for it to happen to a retail bank is something else. What is the small town branch manager going to say after this when confronted with the customer with an unauthorised overdraft? Sorry mate, our

This is a bad, had day for National Westminster Bank - worse, in some to different laws. How is he going to Sir Brian's view seems to have been entirely in petence, as NatWest itself half admits in its explain bonuses, of more than £1m in some cases, earned entirely on the back of bogus profits? How is he going to explain to his staff that a high street bank, a clearing hank for heaven's sake, could ever have contemplated these lottery-type payments in the first place. And how is he going to explain that the "mis-pricing" went on for more than two and a half years without

anyone noticing it?

Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds-TSB, always had a very obvious answer to the sort of position NatWest now finds itself in. The culture and underlying hasiness of retail banking and investment banking are so different that they can never be made to mix, he insists, and any attempt to bind them together under one roof is ultimately doomed to failure. As a consequence, Lloyds has steered clear of investment banking, concentrating instead on building itself into one of the country's lead-

ing retail financial services groups.

NatWest has swung the other way, choosing to reinvest the money it realised by sell-ing Bancorp in the US and Banco Nat West Espana, on bolt-on acquisitions for its investment banking offshoot, NatWest Markets. A key element of group strategy is to huild NatWest Markets into a world

حكدًا من الأصل

Does a clearing hank really have the management nous needed to control and run an investment bank? The skills, disciplines and systems are very different ones. as different, Sir Brian would say, as chalk and cheese. It would be an exaggeration to say that NatWest had it coming, that it is been briefed adds to the suspicion that an innocent dabbling in a business where these were deliberate acts. it was always likely to tose its shirt, but there may be an element of that here.

what so many holh inside and outside the City have been banging on about for so long now - the dangers in financial markets of very high levels of bonus-driven pay. The £8m of bonuses that Nat West will not now be paying appear to have been promised to fewer than 10 people in the interest rate options trading activity where the mischief took place. If these bonuses were profit and success-related, as they almost certainly were, then there was clearly a very powerful incentive both to inflate profits artificially by mis-pricing the options and to construct an elaborate cover-up of what was going on.

Nat West claims not yet to know what the motivation was, if indeed there was any at all. That must ultimately await the judgeclass player in international capital markets ment of regulators. But it's not hard to fig-

statement.

The losses, it says, were obscured by misselling, and the transfer of value hetween books also made the losses and mis-pricing more difficult to detect. This is code for saving there was a deliberate deception. The fact that the Serious Fraud Office has

Can any organisation over hope to stop the determined rotten apple? Well perhaps not in the early stages, but what makes this Furthermore, the whole sorry episode not in the early stages, but what makes this highlights in quite spectacular fashion particular case so hard to understand is that it went unchecked for so long.

There are two possible explanations of why. First interest rate options are quite complex derivative instruments, though not nearly as complex as some, and their pricing requires highly technical modelling. Few non-specialists understand it fully. The second is that these instruments are traded over the counter, so there are none of the usual safeguards and alarm systems that operate in transparent, regulated markets.

Options are customised products and their pricing is to some extent subjective. In this case the mis-pricing was achieved hy feeding absurd interest rate volatility assumptions into the model Whether you are inside or outside, it is hard City people may be able to get away with and securities. Today that strategy looks ure it out. What happened here plainly to tell that this is happening. Since options alives scam.

absurdity of the pricing as there generally is in more traditional financial markets. If steps are then taken further to obfuscate the position by transferring values hetween different hooks, it becomes even more difficult to see what's happening.

None of this should excuse NatWest's failure. Derivatives are sold on the basis that they allow organisations to reduce risk and hedge their exposure to particular market positions and securities. Investment banks make an awful lot of money designing and selling these instruments. But if they cannot control their own risk, who's going to believe that these products actually limit anybody else's.

The great fear is that the explosive growth of these instruments poses a special kind of threat to the financial system. It is not difficult to construct a doomsday scenario in which the world's financial sys tem is brought to a grinding halt by a chain reaction of linked defaults. Fortunately the great interest rate options scandal has proved to be a quite confined episode. This was not the great derivative-triggered collapse that some alarmists think will one day rock financial markets. But that's fat comfon to Derek Wanless and his board at NatWest. They are now going to have to live with the embarrassment of being the first British clearer to fall victim to a deriv-

GEC and Fiat to unite in bid for £600m train order

Kim Sengupta

17 712

THE STATE OF STREET

Fiat of Italy and GEC are to announce the formation of a consortium today to bid for the £600m contract to build a new generation of tilting trains for the InterCity West Coast line.

The huge contract from. Richard Branson's Virgin Rail is expected to create 5,000 new jobs in the UK, and, the new consortium believes, will lead to lucrative export orders from abroad in the future.

Virgin Rail has drawn up a shortlist for the contract for the for off-peak passengers.
high-speed trains, which it- The Fiat/GEC consortium is high-speed trains, which it- The Fiat/GEC consortium is hopes will revitalise the ailing believed to be ready to offer rail London-Scotland journey times

by 90 minutes to four hours. Mr Branson had let it be known that he would favour the contract going to a company that could guarantee creation of jobs in this country. The main rival to the Fiat/GEC alliance is thought to be Swedish company AD Tranz, which took over the British Rail engineering works in Derby.

Fiat has already produced tilting trains for Italy, Switzer-land and Finland. It has also

received orders for them from France and Spain. ADT has manufactured the high-speed trains for networks in Sweden and Germany.

Virgin will receive a first-year subsidy of £76.8m to run Inter-City West Coast but by the end of its 15-year franchise it will be paying the Government £220m

Mr Branson believes the high-speed trains will lure passeogers back from air travel. He has already introduced fare reductions of almost 50 per cent

with carriages equipped with facilities such as seat-back video screens.

An industry insider said: "This is a pretty dramatic step by Fiat and GEC, and it shows both the companies believe there is a bright future for the railways in Britain. It is also felt that Britain can actually become a viable manufacturing base to

supply tilting trains abroad.

Richard Branson has been keen to ensure the company which gets the contract would create jobs in this country. If Fiat did not enter into this alliance its chances of getting the order would have been slim." Fiat's and GEC's desire to bid

for the contract has been boosted by the recent decision by Railtrack to plough £16bn into Britain's train network. It claims the "Lottery size" investment will give the country a "railway that is second to none".

Separately, Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, yesterday gave the go-ahead for the sale of British Rail's Channel Tunnel freight business. Railfreight Distribution, to English, Welsh and Scottish

The sale completes the privatisation of BR's former trainoperating firms. Railfreight joins 25 passenger businesses and five of BR's six freight companies already in the private

Railfreight has 1,200 emolovees and in conjunction with the French railway, SNCF runs 150 trains every week between Britain and Europe through the Channel Tunnel



journey, page 24 | Comfort class: Chief executive Bob Seelert yesterday after announcing the Delta account Photograph: Emma Boam

Cordiant returns to profit

Patrick Tooher

Cordiant, the marketing services group meked by the defection of the founding Saatehi hrothers in 1995, yesterday under-lined a remarkable financial recovery hy paying its first dividend payment to shareholders in seven years and reporting a return to the hlack.

Shares in Cordiant rose 9.5p to 113.5p, helped by news that Delta, the US airline, had hired Saatchi & Saatchi for its \$100m (£63m) account world-wide. "It's our most exciting account win in recent history." said Boh Seel-ert, Cordiant's chief executive.

The Delta contract is the first big airline account Cordiant has landed since British Airways' advertising husiness followed the Saatchi brothers out the door during a haemorrhage of clients two years ago.

which still includes advertising agencies Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates Worldwide, hit £41.8m in 1996 after a loss of £22.6m the year before. The US made a trading profit of £17m after a £16.5m loss the year before, but Europe was hit hy the loss of several large clients, including Reckitt & Colman and the Fuji film account, which had to be resigned after Cordiant's US operation won the rival Kodak contract world-wide.

Investment column, page 22

Mirror Group profits reach all-time high

Patrick Tooher

Mirror Group, the newspaper publisher, yesterday all but ruled out a takeover of Scottish Television, in which it has a 20 per cent stake, even if media ownership rules are relaxed under a new Labour adminis-

"It would be difficult to acquire STV because we would then have an interest in all the number one media brands in Scotland," said David Montgomery, the Mirror's chief executive. Clearly questions would be raised about a monopoly situation.

Mirror Group owns the Daily Record, the best-selling tabloid in Scotland, while STV's £120m purchase of Caledonian Publishing included the Herald, Scotland's leading broadsheet title. Under the Broadcasting Act newspaper publishers such as Mirror Group and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. which have more than 20 per cent of national circulation, cannot increase their interest in ITV companies.

"The 20 per cent will change but it won't affect our strategy." Mr Montgomery said.

He was speaking after Mirror Group reported a 6.6 per cent rise in pre-tax profits before one-off items to a record £82.2m on sales 7.3 per cent higher at £537.7m. Earnings per share before exceptional items rose 6.7 per cent to 14.3p while the dividend was in-

creased by 12.5 per cent to 4.5p. Mirror Group profits have achieved an all-time high, despite predatory price competition and substantially increased newsprint costs," Mr Montgomery said.

The group's flagship Mirror newspaper is Britam's second-top selling tabloid, behind Mr Murdoch's Sun.

Losses from the fledgling Live TV cable channel fell by almost 17 per cent to around £8m. Mirror Group plans to increase the number of city TV stations to seven by launching in Manchester, Glasgow and Newcastle later this year. Live TV is expected to break even in a couple of years.

Mr Montgomery said Mirror Group had no plans to sell its 46 per cent stake in Newspaper Publishing, the company which produces the Independent and Independent on Sunday titles.

Newspaper Puhlishing reduced its operating losses by 43 per cent to less than £6m. Taking into account a management contract with Newspaper Publishing, Mirror Group said its investment was breaking

Mirror Group made an exceptional gain of £19.4m in 1996 from the resolution of several property-related issues and the sale of STV's stake in fel-

low regional broadcaster HTV. An exceptional tax credit of £9.1m was included in the 1996 accounts after a settlement was reached with the Inland Revenue on corporation tax payable for 1991-1994.

"The group is in a good financial position to make prudent investments for the future." Mr Montgomery said. Shares in Mizzor Group closed 7p lower at 209.5p.

Brown in talks for Freemans

Nigel Cope City Correspondent

Shares in N Brown, the mail order group, were suspended vesterday after the company confirmed it was in discussions to buy the Freemans home shopping business from Sears. The announcement follows

last week's decision by Littlewoods to pull out of the Freemans deal when it was told Sears was in discussions with other parties. N Brown is in exchusive talks with Sears and the price is expected to be similar to Littlewoods' £395m offer. Littlewoods said it would still be

Diane Coyle Economics Editor

American shoppers set a crack-

ing pace for retail sales in the

first two months of 1997.

Stronger-than-expected figures

vesterday sent shares on Wall

Street and treasury bonds low-

er because of fears that US in-

terest rates will rise this month.

The Dow Jones index fell be-

low the 7,000 barrier by mid-

morning, with shares down

more than 61 points at 6,978.18.

Retail sales rose by 0.8 per

cent last month, while January's

increase was revised to 1.5 per

cent, more than twice the first

estimate. "If we continue like

this from February, we will see

the best sustained retail spend-

ing in about 10 years," said

Jonathan Basile, an analyst at

Separate figures showed a de-

cline in new unemployment

claims last week, with a drop of

HSBC Markets in New York.

Brown deal collapses.

N Brown would need a sizeable rights issue to fund the deal as it already has gearing of 23 per cent. The company is likely to fund it with a mixture of debt and equity. A rights issue would involve the dilution of the 58 per cent stake in N Brown controlled by the chairman, Sir David Alliance, and his family. The shares were suspended at

377.5p, down 4p.
City analysts said that though the Freemans deal may be dilutive, N Brown's good track record should ensure shareholder support. "It is a highly

5,000 taking the average for the past four weeks to its lowest

mixed views about whether or

not the Federal Reserve will

raise interest rates at the next

meeting of its Open Markets Committee on 25 March. But

the balance of evidence has

tipped towards expecting a

followed further evidence last

week that the American econ-

omy is creating jobs at an ex-

traordinary pace. The non-farm

payrolls total jumped by 339,000

"Beige Book", the regional sur-

vey of the economy which pro-vides the basis for Fed interest

rate decisions, contained evi-

dence on Wednesday of future

inflation pressures. Most regions

reported that businesses found

The Federal Reserve's

Yesterday's retail sales figures

quarter-point increase.

As always, analysts hold

since 1989.

in February.

Wall St unsettled as

retail figures soar

interested in Freemans if the N rated stock and the market is of the UK mail order market likely to be sanguine. Both sets compared to Freemans' 9 per of shareholders would probably cent. The deal would catapult N be supportive," said Sean Ed-die of NatWest Securities.

N Brown said the acquisitions of Freemans would provide it with the opportunity to use its direct marketing skills to in-crease the combined group's sales. Some joh cuts are likely. N Brown's customers are

largely over 50 while those of Freemans are typically in their mid-30s. N Brown's direct-selling approach to mail order could also be applied to the agency business of Freemans. N Brown controls 4 per cent

cent. The deal would catapult N Brown to third place in the mail order market behind Great Universal Stores and Littlewoods.

Sears is under pressure to secure a quick sale as the chief exeeutive. Liam Strong, has promised to return £410m to shareholders. With profits at Freemans falling and morale low. Mr Strong would like to close the deal before Sears' annual results on 24 April.

N Brown made profits of £230m. Freemans made £38m on sales of £531m.

Burger chief goes in GrandMet shake-up

Nigel Cope

Grand Metropolitan, the food and drinks group, yesterday underlined its commitment to its Burger King fast food chain with a boardroom shake-up that will east sbareholders significant sums lo compensation.

Bob Lowes, the Burger King chief executive, Is to leave the group after just over two years in control. He will be replaced by

Dennis Malamatinas, a 41year-old marketing man with a background at Procter & Gamble and Smirnnff vodka. He is currently executive director at GrandMet's IDV drinks subsidiary in the Asia-Pacific region.

There bas been persistent speculation that Borger King would be sold hat GrandMet said yesterday that the reit difficult to recruit new staff. I shuffle reflected the "increas-

ing importance" of the fast food chain to the group

hoard his remuneration was nnt disctnsed. However, his compensation for loss of office is likely to be several hundred thousand pounds.

bonuses.

He was nn a two-year conject of negotiation.

the company had completed its major acquisition and disposal programme.

As Bob Lowes was not on the

Also departing is Grand-Met's group strategy development director, Peter Cawdron. He received total pay of £435,000 last year including

tract and his pay-off is the sub-GrandMet said that it no longer required a group strategy development director as

However, it yesterday named Jim Glover as group strategy director, though this is not a main board post.



Study for a degree in a way that fits your lifestyle.

Every year, thousands of busy people gain BA or BSc degrees with the Open University. Our unique method of teaching lats you study wherever you live and in your own time. Through OU supported open faarning

The Open University comes to you with specially written texts. audio and vidao cassettes. TV and radio programmes and, for soms courses, computer softwars. You also receiva support from your personal tutor and Regional Centre.

OU courses cover arts, science, social science, computing, mathematics, technology, modern languages, husiness management, law, aducation and health and social welfare.

We are in the small group of universities rated as 'excellent' in most subjects by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and over 24,000 employers recognise their importance for career development by sponsoring OU students.

To be aligible, you should be 18 or over and resident in the European Union. No previous qualifications are required.

Don't let the opportunity to gain a qualification pass you by for your free prospectus, use the coupon or call our Hotlina NOW.

Send for your free prospectus on 'Courses, Diplomas and BA/BSc Degrees' NOW.

Degrees prospects	IS.	
Name		<u>u</u>
Address		
Postcode	Tel	

Enterprise Oil rules out large acquisition

Enterprise Oil yesterday scotched speculation that it is about to embark on a big acquisition as it reported a 40 per cent jump in post-tax profits for last year and an increased div-

Investors were relieved that the exploration group ruled out an imminent strike and marked the shares up 18.5p to 652p. Weekend press reports had suggested Enterprise was eyeing up a bid for Monument Oil and Gas, armed with a £1bn war chest. British Borneo was also mentioned as a possi-

ble takeover target. But Pierre Jungels, who took over as chief executive at the start of the year, quashed the re-ports, saying: "We are looking forward to strong internal growth with the asset base and the people we have. We are under no pressure to do anything and we have nothing spe-

cific in mind. To underline the point, he said that Enterprise expected to increase production to 320,000 barrels a day in 1999 compared with total group production last year of just under 243,000

barrels a day. Enterprise launched an unsuccessful £1.6bn hid for fellow exploration group Lasmo three years ago and since then it bas concentrated on building up its own exploration base. This year it expects to invest a further £500m in appraisal drilling and oilfield development which is more than the group's expected cash flow based on an oil price

of £12 a barrel. In particular, Enterprise has high hopes for developments in Norway and Italy, where it has several fields under appraisal in the Southern Apennine region. The advance in after-tax profits was driven on by a continu-

ing reduction in operating cost and a strengthening in oil prices to £13.17 a barrel compared with £10.72 in 1995. The dividend increase to 17p for the year, up by 1p, belped lift the shares even though the post-tax figure was towards the bottom end of forecasts.

Few analysts expect to make any radical move on profits forecasts on the back of the 1996 results, although news of a reserve replacement ratio of 193 per cent and the production targets provided a fillip to sentiment. "There is no doubt Enterprise is on a roll, with a good record of exploration and drilling success and a very positive news flow over the past year," one analyst said.

Another said he would raise his net asset valuation for Enterprise Oil from 549p to around 553p, largely on the back of the company's reduced net debt position. Further upgrades to this figure may be possible on the back of configure may be possible on the back of configure may be the back of positive news on the Clair field, which BP higblighted yesterday, and its Nor-wegian interests.

On a more cautious note, Jon Wright, oils analyst at Merrill Lynch, said that while be was impressed by Enterprise's reserve replacement figures in 1996, be felt too much reliance was being placed on its Italian reserves. "About half of the increase in reserves in 1996 [of around 160 million barrels] was due to Italy," be said.

He also expressed concern about Enterprise's rising tax charge – which climbed from £99.6m to £212.9m largely due to the high levels of Norwegian tax - and the difficulties it may face in a low-price oil environ-

"We are still cautious on the ontlook for Enterprise and will probably maintain our reduce stance on the stock," he said.

Profits jump at Christies despite lean year for big sales



Christies International, the auctioneer and art specialist, expects to start selling several big single-owner collections after a lean year for large sales in 1996. Lord Hindlip, the company's chairman, who yesterday announced a 57 per cent surge to £33.9m in taxable profits and a 70 per cent boost to 4,75p in the dividend payout for last year, said the outlook for

first-half sales was encouraging.
"Several collections have already been consigned for sale, including a collection of Impressionist pictures from the John Langeloth Loeb and Frances Langeloth Loeb collection [including Paul Cézanne's Madame Cézanne eu Fauteuil Jaune', above], and Old Master, 19th century and Modern works from the collection of the late Lore and Rudolf Heinemann."
The profit jump in 1996 was achieved

despite auction sales growth of only 9 per cent to £1.016bn.

Lord Hindlip, commenting on the 1996 figures, said: "The final result is especially pleasing because there were fewer singleowner collections available for sale in comparison with previous years.

Within the sales rise was a 31 per cent crease from Asia-Pacific to a record \$100m (£63m). Auction revenues grew faster than sales, up by 12.5 per cent, helped by a new commission structure Introduced in late 1995.

Auction costs rose by 6.4 per cent, and the company said this should be kept in check by more efficient catalogue oduction processes. The company said it was pressing on with plans to start up as one of the first foreign-owned auction houses in France once new legislation and regulations had been completed.

handful of genuinely strong shares, which halved in four years before hitting bottom at brands - but the cost of sort-

day's full-year figures. Eric Nicoli, chief executive dismissed much of an £84.7m goodwill write-off as nothing more than a goodwill ac-counting effect, but like the £150.3m charge that devas-tated 1995's figures, the exceptional charge represents real money the company has squandered on sharebolders' behalf. A glance at the chart shows the effect of those write-

exceptional items, earnings of

while a 35 per cent fall in operating profits down under

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

UB keeps hacking away but offers few crumbs of comfort

by persistent bid rumours. It is

Slim margins

ella, could be forgiven for say-

tenure at the UK's biggest

sorted out the sprawling em-

pire put together by Sir David

Alliance, who remains chairman. But reality caught up with the group at the beginning of 1994 and the shares have since

underperformed the rest of the

market by nearly 60 per cent.

months to December were as

dismal as ever. Headline pro-

tax profits knocked from £163m

to £94.4m were hammered by

the wide-ranging plans an-

Yesterday's figures for the 12

at Coats

United Biscuits is doing most told its own story. There is no of the right things - hacking sign of a let-up in Australia.

On the basis of forecast of the right things - hacking sign of a let-up in Australia.

On the basis of forecast and directing investment at a profits this year of £120m, the ing itself out after the past five new year, trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 16 at yesterday's close of 248.5p. years' disastrous run was painfully evident in yesterup 11p. Against a backdrop of stiff competition. little geographical diversity and slow un-derlying growth that is quite high enough and only justified

offs over the years on UB's net asset value. The latest hit left pre-tax profits for the year at £24.4m, a dismal return on sales of almost £2bn.

Neville Bain, the departing chief executive of Coats Viy-Earnings per share of 3.2p were quite an improvement on last time's 23.9p loss, but they left the 10p dividend, up 3 per cent, uncovered. Even before ing enough is enough. The first half of his six-and-a-half year textile group saw a near-tripling of the share price as he 14.8p were barely higher than the payout to shareholders.

The success of UB's drive to weed out non-performers and fix them or sell them on was shown by an increase in the proportion of group sales from 70 to 80 per cent that now provides an acceptable return of more than 20 per cent on cap-ital employed. A year ago more than a quarter of sales were in Mr Nicoli's intensive care ward, but recovery at KP. Phileas Fogg and others re-duced the problem areas sig-nificantly. With an average return on capital at those businesses that remain in the sick ward - mainly UK crisps, Benelux soacks and France of 4 per cent, however, they represent quite a drag com-pared with UB's cost of capi-tal of around 12 per cent. The UK is definitely of the

mend, posting a healthy 12 per cent rise in biscuit and snack profits during the year, a 24 per and chilled products and strong growth in core brands

such as Skips.
The problems in continental Europe and Australia, where PepsiCo is throwing its weight about, remain daunting, however. The return in Europe is half UB would bope for

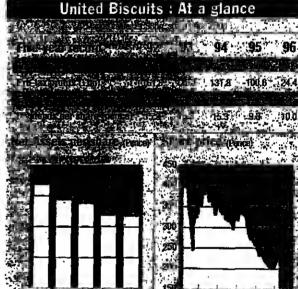
nounced a year ago to accelerate the transfer of production overseas. The figures were well telegraphed, but even stripping out reorganisation charges up from £10.3m to £54.9m. the underlying 7 per cent fall in operating profits to £174m was disappointing. The decision to hold the final 5.1p dividend, leaving an uncovered 8.8p for

the year, and bopes for new chief executive Michael Ost helped propel the shares up 6p to 136.5p yesterday, but the former McKechnie chief executive bard to see who would be prepared to pay much for UB and the recovery in the shares has probably run its course. has a steep hill to climb. Brazil and Turkey, which proved problem children in the early 1990s, have returned to their bad old ways. They ac-counted for £8m of the £10.5m decline in profits to £90.3m in the main thread division. Elsewhere, the Dynacast precision

engineering operation saw profits dip for the first time for

more than five years, falling from £40.1m to £37.6m. But the real disappointment came on the clothing side, Provisions in the Russian operations of the Berghaus brand made up all the fall from £21.8m to £19.1m in divisional profits. More worrying though was the modest improvement in profits from UK contract clothing, which accounts for most of Coats' £315m sales to Marks & Spencer, where margins are

thought to be under 2 per cent. Profits of £150m this year would put the shares on a forward multiple of 10. Even so, only the 8.1 per cent yield pro-



Legal & Generai turns bearish

Magnus Grimond

Legal & General, the insurance group which owns around 2 per cent of all UK shares, is bedging its portfolio against a fall in the stock market. David Prosser, chief executive, said the group had gone cautious on the market after it bit its year-end target. The group was using index options to reduce the risk, be said, but it could start selling shares after the election.

"I think the thing that would make us sell, post-election, is the potential for interest rate rises, whoever wins the election. The economy is growing at quite a fast rate at this stage of the cycle." He said he would expect any new government to attempt to slow economic growth

by raising the cost of money.

That could hit L&G's successful index-tracking fund operation. The group revealed yesterday that it nearly doubled the amount of new UK funds under management to £4.25bn last year, helping raise world-wide assets by a fifth to £48.1bn by the end of 1996. Mr Prosser attributed the growth to the success of the group's "safe and cost-effective" indexed fund, which he claimed was now the largest such pooled vehicle on the market.

He was speaking as the group announced a 15 per cent rise in operating profits to £291m. The dividend rises 14 per cent to 11.13p, after a final of 7.63p.

The main life and pensions business saw premium income soar 54 per cent to £301m, including a quadrupling of new single-premium pensions business, leaving profits 14 per cent ahead at £207m. Mr Prosser ruled out acquisitions to grow the business, but welcomed the initiative by Peter Lilley, the Social Services Secretary, in effect to privatise state pension provision.

The future's right here YOUR ONE-STOP BROKERAGE FOR THE WORLD'S FUTURES, OPTIONS AND FOREX MARKETS linnco

Reckitt dampens bid speculation

Tom Stevenson

Reckitt & Colman poured cold water on recent speculation that the household products group might be the subject of a hid from Unilever and warned that the strength of sterling might hit 1997 profits to the tune of £20m. The two comments were enough to knock 20 off the share price to 797p despite an 11 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits in the year to January.

Vernon Sankey, chief executive, checred shareholders, however, with a £45m annual saving from the integration of recent US purchase L&F, compared with initial hopes for £40m of cost cuts. The 1994 deal brought Reckitt one of America's leading household products portfolios including the Lysol disinfectant brand. Since the acquisition five of 12 factories

The success of the L&F costcutting program offset dis-appointing underlying sales

Crédit Lyonnais, the troubled

French bank that has been kept

affoat by government subsi-

dies, yesterday hoisted the "for

sale" sign over its 54 per cent

stake in Woodchester, the Irish

investment company.

Analysts predicted the shares could fetch up to 300p each.

which compares with yesterday's

closing price of 277.5p, up 5p, and which would realise slightly

more than 1r£350m for Crédit

Lyonnais' shareholding, any such disposal will lead to a full bid for

Woodchester," a spokesman for

the hank said. Woodchester and

Credit Lyonnais have appoint-

ed joint advisers Chase Invest-

ment Bank and Goldman Sachs

International to seek buyers for

A full bid for the company would yield a fortune of almost

Ir£59m for Craig McKinney, the

chairman who owns almost 9

that Woodchester could attract

takeover bids from Lombard &

Ulster, the leasing subsidiary of

The speculation in the City is

per cent of Woodchester.

"Given the level of Crédit

growth which saw turnover rise by only 1.8 per cent to £2.29bn. Operating profits were 9 per cent higher at £372.7m, although the inclusion of a one-off disposal profit in 1995 saw pre-tax profits fail from £417.8m to £334.8m.

Mr Sankey said of the per-sistent Unilever bid speculation: We get rumours all the time and this is another rumour." Reckitt's shares have risen 11 per cent so far this year, mainly on the back of gossip that the Anglo-Dutch consumer goods giant was running its slide rule over the Dettol. Lemsip and

Harpic group.

He also dismissed concerns over Reckitt's relatively pedestrian growth rate, pointing out that 5 per cent underlying growth, excluding currency factors, was a lot better than the company had experienced for many years. He expected growth to ac-

celerate this year even without

The stronger pound cut profits last year by £3m.

National Westminster Bank

the GE Capital leasing company in the US, and Chartered Trust.

which is owned by Standard

said: "We expect to be inun-

dated with interest. We have a

huge motor leasing operation.

insurance broker and a bank.

We're operational in Ireland.

Northern Ireland, the UK, Por-

that all the company's activities achieved considerable growth in

1996, "This has continued into 1997, with new business for

the first two months up by over

30 per cent on the correspond-

ing period last year." he said. Mr McKinney said the es-tablishment of a centralised

back office in Dublin would im-

nounced yesterday, showed that

group pre-tax profits climbed

from Ir£36.4m to 1r£44.3m.

Earnings per share grew from 13p to 15.46p, and the total div-

idend was raised from 6.83p to

The results for 1996, an-

prove efficiency.

Mr McKinney said yesterday

tugal and Denmark."

However, a company insider

Woodchester in the

frame for takeover

IN BRIEF

. The City Disputes Panel will act as the final court of appeal pensions group also announced that Abbey National, Prudential, and AMP of Australia have been asked to submit final, binding proposals for the group by 6pm today. ScotAm will choose a suitor on the basis of policyholder value.

 Further management changes were announced by Toad, the loss-making producer of car security systems that recently sbocked investors with news that Charles Parker had resigned as chief executive and simultaneously issued a warning about falling revenues. The latest changes involve Kevin Turnbull, managing director of main operating subsidiary, Toad Innovations, and Iain Brown, international director of Toad Innovations, resigning from the board and leaving the group with immediate effect.

 John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, has decided, on the advice of the director-general of Fair Trading, to refer the acquisition by Carlton Communications of Metrocolor London, currently owned by Time Warner Entertainment, to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The commission is required to make its report by 25 June. Separately, Time Warner said it had abandoned plans to list on the London Stock Exchange.

 General Cable announced an increase in full-year pre-tax losses from £21.17m to £29.81m, but said that net churn of customers continued to improve, falling from 28 to 21 per cent in cable television and remaining flat at 17 per cent in residential telephony. The company also announced the acquisition of Imminus, the largest independent managed data network services provider in the UK, for a total consideration of up to £33m. In 1996, Imminus made pre-tax profits of £2.75m on turnover of £15.38m.

 BAA said its seven airports handled a total of 6.5 million passengers in February, an increase of 4.8 per cent on the same month last year. The company said that Eire traffic recorded the strongest growth, up 17 per cent, adding that other long-haul routes in-creased by 9.1 per cent and North Atlantic routes by 8.3 per cent.

 Profits at Graham Group, the building products group, tum-bled from £19.3m to £10.66m in 1996. However, the company said: 'As we enter 1997, our markets bave emerged positively from the steep decline in 1996 and we expect these early trends to lead to sustained growth." It added that the upturn in the bousing market came too late to have "any significant impact on trading in 1996".

Company Results

Torover E Pre-las E EPS

1 20m t-0 25mt S 28m t-18 7mt of t-1

Desirement (1)	- (-)	१ अस्ति (न्यान्स्स)	3.28p (-18./p)	DE (-)
Sritish Mohatr (F)	44.2m (48 1m)	9.87m (2.30m)	4 42p (1.54p)	S.5p (9p)
Cape (F)	243m (244m)	-13.2m (11.5m)	-24.7p (14p)	5p (11p)
Christies Inital (F)	227m (192m)	33.9m (27.5m)	1277p (8.63p)	4.75p (2.8p)
Costs Viyella (F)	2.450n (2.34bn)	94 4m (163m)	Sp (15.7p)	8.8p (8.8p)
Cortworth (P)	67.2m (70 5m)	10.1m (4.94m)	14.4p (15.5p)	6.5p (-)
Courts Consulting (F)	38.3m (33 7m)	3 04m (2.39m)	2.760 (2.520)	2.30 (20)
Davis Service Grp (F)	344m (343m)	32.0m (24.1m)	18.52p (14.42p)	10.29p (9.35p)
Piscal Properties (F)	7.08m (5.14m)	1 23m (1 65m)	30 (3.30)	≅ (-)
General Cable (F)	55 Tm (30 Tm)	-29 Sm (-21.2m)	-9 Sp (-8.1p)	œ (+)
Gibbs & Dendy (F)	29.3m (27.4m)	1.21m (7 09m)	10.4p (9.7p)	3 759 (3.59)
Grabam Group (F)	534m (489m)	10.7m (19.3m)	5p (10.2p)	5.7p (-)
Jeyes Group (F)	113m (117m)	2.93m 11.29m)	9p (3 4p)	Tp (7p)
Lambert Hywarth (F)	93.7m (89.2m)	2.2m (J 6m)	119 (9.60)	7 5p (7.1g)
Legal & General (F)	-1-1	29 (a. (253m)	16 57p (14 88p)	11.130
HAD (F)	21 Am (13 Sm)	-7 Qm (-4.0m)	-7.825 (4.426)	E5(-)
Mirror Group (F)	538m (501m)	102m (107m)	19.8p (19.8p)	4.5p (4p)
Melles (F)	306m (286m)	33.4m (29.8m)	72.8p (65 4p)	220 (200)
Рапу Скрар (F)	455ra (414m)	8.27m (6.54m)	21 (5 (16.85)	5p (8p)
Neison Zersi (F)	50.6m (45 6m)	8.307m (11 54m)	11p (16.3p)	8.5p (7.8p)
Piltards (F)	109m (110m)	3 63m (-0 52m)		3.250 (1.50)
Rectult & Colman (F)	2.3(bp (2.25bn)		57 7p (76.8p)	21.979 (20.159)
Sirder (I)	27 Sm (28.4m)		3.16¢ (3.460)	1 79p (1.79p)
United Bismills (F)	1.990a (3.005n)	24.4m + 101ms		100 (9.80)
(F) - Snai (f) - Interon				

Cordiant rewards shareholders

Investors who subscribed to Cordiant's deeply discounted £127m rescue rights issue in 1995 are sitting pretty. It took a leap of faith to shell out 60p a share to back the marketing services group when it was staring into the abyss after founders Charles and Maurice Saatchi left in a huff and took large clients such as British Airways with them.

But Cordiant, under the chief executive, Bob Seclert, is right to say it is delivering on the undertakings given at the time of the rights issue. Most of the accounts lost to the Saatchi brothers have been replaced, costs controlled and

margins raised. The result was a £41.8m pre-

a return to the dividend list for the first time in seven years. sheet, which had a deficit of £356m on shareholders' funds in 1995, has been sorted out.

True, Cordiant still has a

Better still, the balance Average net debt fell from £125m to £15m while interest cover is a comfortable 6.6

long way to go to achieve its target of 10 per cent operating margins by the end of 1998. These currently stand at 6.4 per cent, compared with the double-digit margins chalked up by rivals such as Martin Sorrell's WPP.

Given a fair wind, though,

tax profit in 1996, versus a Mr Scelert should deliver on £22.6m loss a year earlier, and this promise as well. There is this promise as well. There is every reason to suppose revenue growth will at least match the industry average of 6 per cent. Assuming a stable exchange rate, profits and earnings in 1998 should double if the margin targets are

> That would imply a prospective price/earnings ratio of just 10 with the shares at

113.5p, up 9.5p.
That looks good value, especially as Cordiant could always enhance shareholder value by spinning off Siegel & Gale, its US design and corporate identity arm, or even demerge the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency it still owns.

'Internet on TV' agreement helps Maid turn the corner

A bullish prediction by Dan Wagner, chief executive of Maid, that the on-line business information provider would make "considerable profits" this year put some pep into the company's share price, which has been in free fall since Christmas. Mr Wagner, who yesterday amnounced that Maid's losses deepened from £4m to £7m in 1996, claimed the final three months of 1996 marked a "turning point" for the company.

"Costs will remain roughly static in 1997 following the

trend seen in the fourth quarter, while sales growth will re-main strong," he said. "The trends are clear, they will continue, and we are set for considerable profits in 1997."

The share price, which started the new year north of 300p, rapidly gained 15p to 187.5p after the company's results and accompanying trading statement were released.

Michael Mander, chairman, said: "The first two months of 1997 bave started off with 4th Network, and become its be specified.



Dan Wagner: Expects to make 'considerable profits'

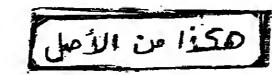
record usage levels and buoyant subscriber revenues, together with the conclusion of new alliances,"

This year's results will bene-fit from last month's agreement with 4th Network of the US that guarantees Maid \$5m (£3m) in



agent in Europe. Maid received \$7.5m worth of shares in 4th Network, a provider of Internet access to hotels.

It will also receive 10 per cent of 4th Network's Internet access revenue for 30 years, and m 1998 and 1999, Maid will bank guar-anteed royalties of \$6m and \$7m The company will transfer its respectively, subject to performance criteria which have yet to



market report/shares

Data Bank FISE 100 4397.7 24.8 × FTSE 250 FISE 250 221/5.2 46.0 SEAQ VOLUME!



Ladbroke tipped to try its luck with Capital Corp

Although the Gold Cup was it hopes to expand its gaming undoubtedly the main event for presence in London. Capital many in the stock market there is a suspicion one of the major Cheltenham players is about to place a big bet on the a lacklustre session weighed spin of London's roulette down by New York which in

preparing to intervene in the £180m takeover battle for Capital Corporation, the Crock-

The bookies have admitted they are keeping an eye on Capital since London Chibs International barged in with its

The casino tussle has occurred as Ladbroke is pulling in the cash from winding down its property division and is in a comfortable position to mount a counter-strike. It already owns four London

shares rose 1p to 205.5p and LCI put on 1.5p to 402.5p.

The rest of the market had turn was fretting about the pos-Ladbroke, the betting and hotel group, edged ahead 4p to 242.5p in busy trading as the rumour strengthened it was worry about the looming elec-tion which it bas, surprisingly, so far treated with blissful in-

> difference. Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television was the day's major ca-sualty following Granada's statement it had no current plans to bid. The shares crashed 117.5p to 1,162.5p with the warrants off 122.5p at 957.5p. Granada fell 17p to 956.5p.

The Granada comments came ahead of today's yearly results from United News & casinos and has made no secret Media which has a significant



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN stock market reporter of the year

Yorkshire stake and is the Monument Oil & Gas, down biggest holder of the warrants of at 82.75p. But another with 34.3 per cent. The war-favoured Enterprise target, rants, with a 200p exercise price, are running out of time dicate, quickly recovered an and if United switched it would early 127.5p fall, ending the seslift its stake to around 18 per

There is talk United, off 3.5p at 740.5p, intends to accompany today's figures - around £280m is expected - with a strike at Yorkshire and HTV where it has 29.9 per cent.

Enterprise Oil was the bestperforming blue chip, up 18.5p to 652p, following results; Lasmo was also caught in the action, gaining 4.5p to 241p.

The failure of any Enterprise

£135m.

British Borneo Petroleum Synsion up 2.5p at 1,425p. National Westminster Bank

feli 5p to 739p as the option scandal losses grew to £90m some other banks gave ground in sympathy.

Argos, the catalogue stores chain, lost 24p to 640p following its Footsie dismissal and Storehouse gave up 1.5p to 266p as NatWest Securities cut its profit forecasts by 55m cut its profit forecasts by £5m to £123m and by £7m to

The securities house, however, put a sell sign over Iceland, the frozen food retailer which is indulging in a share buy-back. The shares melted

4.5p to 95p.

De la Rue, the security printer, fell 24p to 592.5p as stockbroker Cazenove was said to bave made cautious noises. Centrica, the gas supply half of the old British Gas, was the

day's most busily traded share

with the price shading 1.5p to A cautious trading statement from Molins, the tobacco machinery group, lowered the shares 70p to 830p and Rentokil Initial continued to suffer from disappointment

12.5p to 403p. Ario Wiggins Appleton edged ahead 1.5p to 195.5p. BZW thinks the depressed

over its results, falling a further

warrants on the paper players. But Shield Diagnostic, the bealthcare group, continued to

march ahead in front of an investment presentation: the shares surged 87.5p to 805p. They were 150p last month. Dana Petroleum, forging further links in the former Soviet Union, added 2p to 23.5p

and financial services group

DBS Management improved 67.5p to 802.5p, anticipating a move from AIM to full listing. show MM arrived last year Frost, the garage group which has been squeezed unmercifully in the petrol price war, is due to produce figures next week. Around £13.5m is has had a dismal time, held at 12.75p. The car security 126.5p. Micro Focus, the comclosed it was announced that

Stordata Solutions, which has had a dismal time, held puter group, improved 40p to pany produced disappointing 1,202.5p. After the market profits of £1.5m last year but market hopes are high it is set for more than £2.2m which puts the shares nn a

Taking Stock

developing a video-telephone system, were suspended on the fringe Ofex market as £450,000 was raised through 190p, the shares have hit 310p on talk of deals with BT and Continental groups. The company says it is talking with "a number of prospective major customers" and its video-phone is being exhibited at a German electronics at 67.5p. Dealings are expect-

> the former chairman, Brian Reynolds, had sold 275,000 shares and was left with 3.3 per Prices are in starting except where exact. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The procedamnegs (P/E) rate is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional terms. Other details: If Ex. rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market a Suspended pp Partty Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. \$ AlM Stock Source: FT Information The Index allows you 8 access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply diel 0891 123 335, and when prompted to do, so enter the 4-digit code printed next so each share. To access the latest financial reports diel 0891 1233 followed. 306 FTSE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rases 04 507 LK Stock Market Report 01 Bullion Report 05 308 LK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 308 Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The independent index, including its portfolio lacility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpitre 011 673 4378 (900am - 500pm). Market leaders: Top 20 volumes 1530000 Albert Fisher 910000 Coets Viye 140000 Card Schweppes 860000 Prodental

Why pay to bank when First Direct is free?

Or 24 hour telephone banking to the physical design of the physical de

Services of the control of the contr

Rail operators embark on a hazardous journey

t was a journey into the un-known. British Rail, loss-I making, unloved and underfunded was never going to have an easy ride to the market. Despite gloomy predic-tions, the Government has parcelled off £2.7bn worth of assenger services to private firms in just over 12 months. Buoyed by a growing economy, most firms have seen a 5 per cent rise in passeoger numbers.

Many doubt this increase is sustainable. Critics point out that in the mid-Eighties, more than 370,000 people used mainline BR services to commute to London. By the early 1990s, that had dropped by 25 per cent to

Those figures have oot de-terred the private sector. Private firms are hrimming with ocw ideas to attract travellers and are convinced that by increasing ssenger numbers and culting staff they can make money. Early signs are promising. Midland Main Line, which runs services from Londoo to Leeds and is owned by National Express, introduced a family fare of £19 and saw passenger reveoue rise by nearly 9 per cent.

Companies have amhitious plans to invest in rolling stock. Chiltern, the company which runs trains from London to Birmingham, has ordered four trains and Loodon Tilbury Southend, a commuter service known as the misery line to passengers, has placed a £200m order for 44 trains to come into

service by oext year. New carriages are key to increasing cash. Owners have realised these will increase capacity by 10 per cent and reduce running costs by 15 per ceot. Thames Trains, under British Rail, managed a 30 per ceot increase in ticket sales in three years after it introduced

its diesel units. Not all the innovations are welcomed. Lord Palumho, former chairman of the Arts Council, asked peers last week: "Why should the liveries of privatised rail companies be such as

A rash of takeovers is expected next year, writes **Randeep Ramesh**

The rail operators' dash for cash

Gabyick Express, Central North London Railways Mickend Main Line, Scottaff

Great Mortic Eastern Relivery

Cross Country, Wast Coast

North West Replonal Pla

tem, companies hid to run

routes. The licence is awarded

to the company that asks for the

lowest subsidy or offers the

length of the franchise while

meeting minimum standards.

erators is daunting. In order to fill the gap between dwindling

subsidies and the cost of running a franchise operators must in-

crease passenger oumbers and

cut costs. An analysis by The In-

dependent shows the challenge

The study uses industry fig-

ahead for private companies.

ures for fixed costs such as

charges by Railtrack, the owner

of track, signalling and sta-

1995-2002 (Em) . Proffic Dat. (Pm)

The task ahead for private op-

Line's "tea and tangerine" colours have oot dissuaded passengers. But travellers are probahly more impressed with the £13m refurbishment programme

of its 125 high-speed trains. The trickle of marketing wheezes designed to woo back Virgin, which plans to order ssengers will turn into a flood. more than £1bn worth of tilting trains, has the most grandiose plans. But it also has the most amhitious growth targets. Richard Bransoo's West Coast service aims to quadruple reveoue to £1bo in 15 years.

Competitioo for each train company was fierce. Under the Government's franchising sys-

tions, and fees charged by Roscos (rolling stock compa-nies) for leasing carriages. It also includes controllable costs such as maintenance charges and wage hills. By combining these, it is possible to estimate the rate at which each train company must grow its passenger revenue to make a profit.

The model predicts that seven of the 25 franchises will need more subsidy in the next few years. This is unlikely under any government committed to pruning expenditure. "There were some racy bids for some of the companies. I think many people are quite worried by how much they need to grow," said

one analyst.
According to SBC Warburg.
Great Western has to raise revenues by only 0.2 per cent a year to make money, Great Eastern, hich runs commuter services to London from Essex, a comfortable 3 per cent and Regional Railways a stiffer 4 per cent.

South West Trains, owned by bus giant Stagecoach, will see an operating profit of more than £100m at the end of 2002 if passenger revenue grows at 4 per

Some firms will find it hard to cut staff at the rates predicted by the model. When South West Trains cut 10 per cent of its driving staff, the company was forced to wipe 39 services

Leaked documeous from three franchises in the north of England show owners are preparing to shed 25 per cent of the workforce - more than

The Big Six - National Exess, Connex, Virgin, Prism, Great Western and Stagecoach - all have profit centres whose cash flow will guarantee money for other parts of their rail

Privately, civil servants and industry executives say they expect a rash of takeovers next year, when struggling franchises will be added to the rail divisions of larger, more successful busi-nesses. This, of course, is what happened the last time the railways were in private hands.

This year's blockbuster - a steamy tale of corporate governance

Neville Bain, the departing Coats Viyella chief executive, is looking forward to a busy time in his new incarnation. He hopes to combine a series of non-executive roles (he is opeo to offers) with his burgeoning career as an

Mr Bain has reached the last five for the Management Consultancy Association's book of the year for the second year running. The winner of the £5,000 prize will be announced next week. Mr Bain's first tome went under the boddice-ripping title of Successful

Management.
This year's steamy tale is entitled Winning Ways Through Corporate Governance, written with Professor David Band. Also up for the prize is The Fish Rots From the Head: the Crisis in Our Boardrooms by Bob Garratt, who could certainly give Mr Bain a few tips on titles.

As a demonstration of his confidence in picking up the prize, the Coats Viyella man is planning to be in Mexico

Still on Coats Viyella, profits took a hit in Brazil for a. bizarre reason last year poor sales of kite string. Finance director Kirk Stephenson says that low cloud and damp conditions affected demand. Flying kites is apparently a popular pastime in Brazil and competitions are keenly contested. The latest thing is weaving glass into the string so that contestants can saw

through the threads of rivals.

Richard Koch, the company doctor who helped rescue Filofax after its post-Eighties meltdown, is hoping for great things from his new book, He is one of three authors responsible for a potential business best-seller entitled, Breakup! When Large Companies are Worth More Dead than Alive. It concentrates on a topical

subject - whether or not

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Shortlisted: Neville Bain's latest could be a prizewinner

Interestingly the

company.

publishers have sent a copy to Sir Gerald Elliott, the

former Christian Salvesen

chairman who is opposed to

the planned break-up of the

distribution and power hire

Christopher Haskins, the

was in feisty mood at a

included two-tier boards

chairman of Northern Foods,

conference on "Democracy

and the Economy" yesterday. Speaking at London
Business School, his targets

large companies would be better off splitting themselves up into smaller units à la Hanson, British Gas, Thorn-EMI and Courtaulds.

Authors Andrew Campbell, David Sadtler of the Ashridge Strategic Management Centre and Mr Koch argue that almost all multi-businesses destroy value and that synergy is a myth. They say demerger is not a fad but an unstoppable trend that could release \$1,000bn in additional value.

The Government is quite

("not an appropriate alternative for this country") and deregulation ("It's come

to a gory head in the BSE

He also had it in for the Government on its treatment of abattoirs in the BSE issue. happy to have named league tables in schools. It is also prepared to have league tables of abattoirs but is not prepared to name them because of commercial confidentiality. There is another scandal here which I hope will come out before very long."

The City is preparing for fun and frolics for Red Nose Day today. The Bank of England is staging an hour-and-a-half "aerobathon" for charity as well as a dress-down day. Sadly, Governor Eddie George will not be taking part in either, as he has conveniently arranged for a

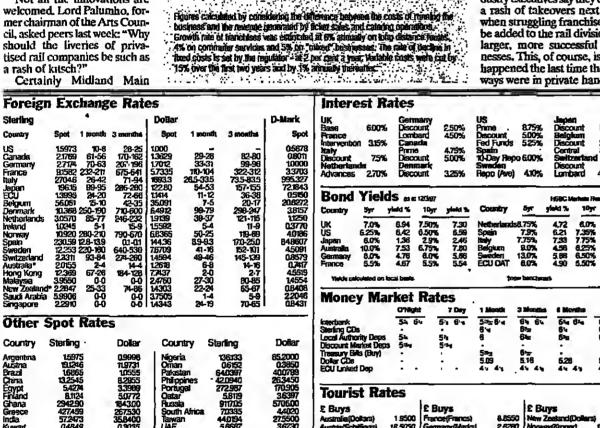
day off. There have been reports that the Bank was due to stage a knobbly knees competition. A fine idea but the big-wigs of Threadneedle Street denied any knowledge

Elsewhere, the Stock Exchange, Price Waterhouse and City lawyers Linklaters & Paines are taking apart in the City Red Nose Run. Some 2,000 participants from 124 companies will join TV personality Dani Behr in the race from St Paul's Walk near Southwark Bridge to the London Television Centre on the South Bank. All contestants will be wearing red noses and carrying lollinops.

Price Waterhouse has been receiving some criticism for only agreeing to a "limited

This means no shorts or lond shirts but respectable chinos and polo shirts instead, "Some of our people might just have to meet clients, you know," retorted a spokesman.

Nigel Cope



Bond	Yield	ds	12/3/97				H58C M	Cortain He	now ch
Country	Syr	ylatd %	1037	yloid %	Country	Syr	ylaki %	10yr	ylekt '
UK	7.0%	6.94	7.50%	7.30	Netherlands		4.72	6.0%	5,56
US	6.25%	6.42	6.50%	6.59	Spein	7.9%	6.21	7.35%	6.98
Japan	6.0%	1.36	2.9%	2.45	Italy	7.75%	7.33	7.75%	7.61
Augusta	10.0%	7.53	6.75%	7.80	Belgium	8.0%	4.58	6.25 X	5.77
Germany	8.0%	4.76	8.0%	5.66	Sweden	13.0%	5.68	6.50%	6.82
France	5.5%	4.67	5.5%	5.54	ECU OAT	6.0%	4.90	5.50%	6.09
Vields cal	culated on I	best best			too	الماري مجر	44		
Mone	v Ma	rket	Rat	es					
		C'Nig		7 Day	1 Month	3 Mangar	6 MG	rithe .	1 Year
interbank		54	64 5	5'n 6'-s	53 <u>5 6'4</u>	64 64		B4	On Gr
Sterling CD:		•			8.4	60±	64		₽₽E
Local Autho				jų.	8	642	(C) Na		80×
Discount Ma		3 534		574	•	:	•		-
Treasury Bil	is (Buy)	•			522	6.2	:		·
Dollar CDs	D			•	5.09	5.16	5.28		5.54
ECU Linked	Deb	•	•	•	44 44	44 44	44	43	44 44
Touris	t Ra	tes							
E Buys			£ Bu	TUR		£ Bu	rve.		
Australia (Do	Sec.	1.9500		e(Francs)	8.855	n New 3	eelandi	Dollaret	2 2130
Austria Sch		18.5050		any (Mark			y/Kione		10.5300
		54.2300	Cognity	and incorpe	ne) 415.000				53.5000
Belgrum(Fra				e(Dracks					
Canada (Dol		2.1210		Kong(Do			(Pesetas		21.7500
Cyprus(Pou		0.7860		d(Punts)	0.990	Swed	en(Kroni		11.9400
Denmark (Kr		10.1050			2544 000		mand(Fi		2.2575
Holland(Gui Finland(Max		2.9475		Yen)	191.900		y(Lira)		30.0000
		7.9350	Mata		0.598		States		

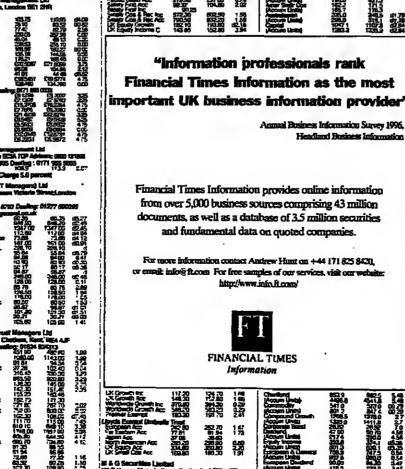
Contract	Contract		High/l for d		EstConts traded	Open
Lang Gilt Germen Get Bd	計算	111-20	111-28	111-21	3026	29065 239457
Raisan Band	100 M	125.97	101,63	125 20	205547 83534	105586
Japan Gvt Bd	Spen (BS)	126.32	128.30 128.38	128.25	1544	rv/a.
3 Mith Sterling	250	93.75	93.76	93,74	5828 12045	83011 136301
S Math Euroment	便数	96.74	93.57 96.74	96 73	6762	162213
3 Mth Eurofin	西 春	96.72 92.63	96 74 92 67	96.71 92.58	28202 11310	198821
3 Mith Euroyen	FEET 252	93.01	93.04	92.88	28285	110281
3 Mith Europerior	阿里斯	98.11	98.11	98.06	5238	27889
3 MIN ECU	經濟	96.16 95.75	98.17 90.76	95.72	12967	40575 8333
STRE 100	100	95.74 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	95.75 4400.0	95.70 4373.0	2187 18734 -	* 7802 45748
FTSE 100 FTSE 250	(Mar. 30)	4736.0	4100.0	40100	0	4649
Apr May Jun Energy Breat Crude	(S/barrel)	125/37 155/62 189/80 Gas of (5/1			36/100 68/125 97/141 Products †	110/161 (\$/tonne)
PE 5.30pm	*chg Yr ago	PE close	*chg	Ория	Spot CIF NW Eur	ope
	+0.49	Mar 163.25			Prem.Unleaded	209/211
	+0.35	Apr 185.25		20.90	Naphtha.	197/200
Aun 19.30	+0.20	May 168.50	-3.90 Jun		EC Gasoil	170/171
V-1	lodec: 19.19	Vol: 23	1673 Jul		Heavy Fuel OI	82/84
						or adam
	provious day. Yel	7 000 Michael Section 1				
Vot: 57899 ****** 530pm			9 10 THE 201			Indicas
	dity Inc	lices			GSCI	Indices Scho Yr
Commo	dity Inc	lices	chg Day 31	Dec %d	GSCI og YTD Year ogo	%cbg Yr
Commo	dity inc	ices +Spot 7	chg Day 31 +0.50 21	Dec %ci	GSCI lg YTD Year ago 0.35 195.79	7kchg Yr -1,44
COMMO	dity Inc	+Spot 74 192.98 +	chg Day 31 +0.50 215 -2.24 23	Dec %ci	GSCI og YTD Year ogo	%cbg Yr
Commodulumed	Base date 1970–100 1970–100 1983–100 1977–100	192.98 + 192.98 + 193.73 + 196.33 + 1	chg Day 31 -0.50 215 -2.24 231 -2.03 85 -0.00 161	Dec %d 126 -10 123 +1 186 -2 3.79 +10	GSC3 by YTO Year ago 0.35 195.79 9.73 262.99 0.73 66.34 0.29 189.61	7 chg Yr -1.44 -10.34
COMMO	Base date 1970–100 1970–100 1983–100 1977–100 1977–100	192.98 + 192.98 + 193.73 186.33 186.38	chg Dey 31 -0.50 215 -2.24 23 -2.03 85 -0.00 161 -0.08 19	Dec %d 126 -10 123 +1 186 -2 1.79 +10	GSCI 19 YTD Year 190 0.35 195.79 1973 282.89 0.73 66.34 0.29 189.81 1.39 162.02	7ctsg Yr -1,44 -10,34 +2,58 -1,84 +3,48
Commodulumed	dity inc Ease date 1970-100 1970-100 1970-100 1977-100 1973-100	192.98 + 192.98 + 193.73 + 186.33 + 186.38	chg Dey 31 -0.50 215 -2.24 23 -2.03 85 -0.00 161 -0.08 19	Dec %d 126 -10 123 +1 186 -2 1.79 +10	GSC3 by YTO Year ago 0.35 195.79 9.73 262.99 0.73 66.34 0.29 189.61	7chg Yr -1.44 -10.34 +2.58 -1.84

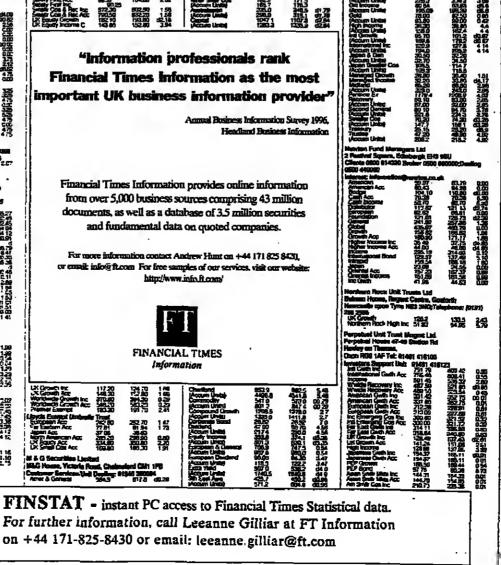
Ind	ustr	ial M	etals				London I	detail Ex	change
		.S/tonne (Courts	3 mithe	V	oliumes.	LME Stod	os.	chg
Alumin	em HG	1635.5	96.6 16	57.0-67.5	72	285	877675		2975
	ATTO ATTOM			549.0-50		906	73620		120
Сорра		.2400.54	125	2340-41		3763	205925		3050
Lead		909.0		592.0-4.0		1419	108075		100
Nuclos!		. 7970-7		8080-85		714	45810	· +	16
Thη		6050		6050-60		8 57	9430		290
Znc		1261.54		53.0-54.0		042	469375	•	1025
		Conversion		\$/Qm	\$4		tock volumes		
	zierge rat	ma:	1.6016	1.6946	122.5	8 k	nnee es at T	y e 11 Me	<u> </u>
Pr	ecio	us Me	etals					Spir	ık & Şor
pen the A		<u> </u>	£ 0	colona	\$	2			5 5
Platicu		32.00 238 ,			375		Krughands		4 221/22
Pallade		52.00 95.		mic.5 OZ	100		Sova	85/9	
Stiver a				nnia 25 oz	94		Nobles		2 235/24
Gold B	um 3	52.90 220	.70 EME	nnia.10 oz	45	28	Maple Leaf	360/37	6 225/23
Ag	riculi	tural	no at 12/3/97						CMS
Coo		Cott		Barle		Prd	ntoes	Dott	does
UPF					Z/CHTNe		FE Chonne		GM/100
					2000	Ç.	C WINES	٠i٠	Carriota
Mar	994		1735	Mer	B9.50	Apr	51.50	Mar	11.00
. May	1008	May	1735	May	90.25	May		April	12.00
Vok	10488		1732	Sopt	90.75	Jun	69.00	Мву	13.30
TUC	10400	Vok	4870	Voc	. 44	Vol:	117	Vol:	134
White	Sugar	Preig	fit	Wheel		Con			
UFFE	Share	LIFT	E SIONIKE	LIFTE	\$Acons	CBC		Central	
14-	304.70	Feb					HHO		Send
May	303.80	Mar	1520 1620	Mar	96.80	Mer	209/3	12.75	304.25
Oct	300.50	Vol:	1585	May	98.90	May	305.75-2		301.75
Voi	1240	inches	1454	Jul Vol:	101.25 562	Jul	304.75-2		300.50
			1-04	100	302		30T.13E		
Ot	ier (Softs							
Mar		e (No.3)***	S/tonne	109.0	Apr	Sov	085 FI	/100kg	104.
	Copr		S/torme	135.0	Mar		Onut OT (1)	Monne	752.5
Mar		IT (NY) US	cent/lo	64.80	Mar	Sun	dower Oile	Shores	535.
Mar	COLL								
Mar	Wool		cent/kg	una	Apx	Rao	espect OWSF	1/100m	104.5

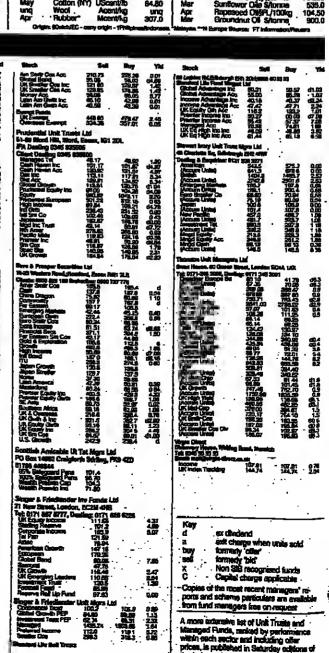


rate quoted low to high are at a premium









sport

Court verdict for **Blarney Army**

The Austrian Derby is not gen-erally regarded as one of the more important Cheltenham trials - indeed, very few of the punters arriving here yesterday were aware even of its existence - but that may change following Commanche Court's victory in the Triumph Hurdle here vesterday.

Less than a year ago. Commanche Court was winning the most important Classic in Austria for the French yard of the trainer Nicolas Clement, and in the process, catching the eye of Ted Walsh, a man whose business cards probably list his oc-

cupation as "trainer and talker". Yesterday, Walsh's judge-ment was richly vindicated, as Commanche Court's gritty run up the hill saw off the challenge of Circus Star and Shooting Light in one of the week's most competitive races.
"I've often wondered what it

feels like to be standing here. Walsh said as he greeted his first Festival winner as a trainer. "Now 1 know how the top trainers feel. It was marvellous. I have a great following and the Irish people know I love every aspect of this. I've often cried when some of my pals have had winners, and I'm just glad it's me this year.

Commanche Court needed almost all of yesterday's two miles and a furlong trip simply to get going, so it was no surprise to hear Norman Williamson, his rider, nominate the 1997 Stayers' Hurdle, not the Champion, as a possi-

hle target next year. Williams said: "I wasn't happy at all until we passed the water jump. He could be anything but it might he that in 12 last and Terry [Biddlecombe, her husband] said he'd won before the last." Such confidence py at all until we passed the wamonths' time he'll need a bit fur- can often prove misplaced at the

NNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: No

Greg Wood on a Triumph success for a trainer best known for his eloquence

By co-incidence, last year's Triumph winner, Paddy's Re-turn, led the field into the home straight in the Stayers' Hurdle which followed, but close on his heels were Karshi and a statuesque Jamie Osborne. For Lord Vestey, the chairman of Cheltenham racecourse, a lifelong wait for a Festival winner

was about to come to an
Festival top ride
Jockey W
A P McCoy
R Dunwoody
Mr R Thornton
J Osborne
D Bridgwater
C F Swan
R Farrant
Jamie Evans
Mr M Harris
T J Murphy
N Williamson :
ALT BEALL B

ay: 59,488 (6,584 up on '96)

Three-day-total: 143,774 Karshi is trained by Henrietta Knight, the owner's sister-inlaw, who was also saddling her "Jamie said he was going to try and make a run then give him a hreather," she said. "It looked quite a long breather to me but the speed."

Bookmakers were not quite he was cruising at the second-

ther. He's as gutsy as they Festival, but such was the ease of his win that Karshi, a sevenyear-old, seems sure to be a ma-

several seasons to come.

jor force in staying events for

Uncle Ernie, by contrast, is rapidly approaching retirement. but enough vigour remained in his 12-year-old legs to record a Festival victory which, since he had reached the frame on four separate occasions, was richly deserved. His association with the meeting stretches back to 1991, when he was runner-up to Remittance Man in the Arkle Trophy, and also includes a fourth place behind Viking Flagship in the Champion Chase, which must make the 25-1 available about him for the Grand Annual Handicap Chase yesterday the hindsight bet of the week.

Jimmy Fitzgerald, his trainer, said: "He will definitely retire this season, but he'll go to Aintree first. He's been at it since he was a two-year-old, and he even won as a juvenile, hut we want him home safe with no misfortunes."

Liverpool should also be the destination for Fantus, winner of the Foxhunters' Chase for the second time in three years. "I really think you've got to fancy him in the Grand National off first winner at the meeting. 10 stone," Tim Mitchell, his rid-

> Bookmakers were not quite so enthusiastic, however, and while the Tote trimmed his earlier odds of 50-1 for the National, 33-1 is still available.



Messrs Mulligan and McCoy belie odds

When they went down to the start in the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup most Irish eyes were on Danoli, and the confident prediction was that quite a shindig would hreak out in the unsadding enclosure if he cap-tured the great prize. "You won't be able to move down there for madmen," somehody said. A cheer went up as Danoli passed by and there was a applause too for another fancied Irish challenger. Doran's Pride who had already survived a threat of withdrawal caused by

the unusually fast going. Not much attention was paid however to the lightly-raced Mr Mulligan, despite the pres-ence on his back of Tony Mc-Coy, who rates so highly among contemporary figures in the

light in McCoy's sights from start to finish when he won the Champion Hurdle on Make A Stand, perhaps Mr Mulligan should have come under closer scrutiny when contesting the lead with Duhlin Flyer after some six or seven fences had

been negotiated. Doubtless, a fall at the last in the King George VI Chase on Boxing Day that has left him marked for life figured among the estimates in running, but the sight of Mr Mulligan jumping hrilliantly and his keenness between fences began to make room for general changes in opinion.

Comparative novices in the field were making very little headway and the further the race went the more likely it in the saddle. McCoy has long

Ken Jones on the day when the Danoli fan club was silenced

scemed that McCoy would score a rare double.

McCov had two fistfuls of running horse and the majoritv in the stands watched with growing admiration. Some pretry hefty bets were going down - hut what could be done about such an impressive combina-

Young jump jockeys are advised not to let horses loaf into fences unless they enjoy getting hurt, but to send them in as hard as they will go. A naturally gifted performer

since refined his technique, and in any case Mr Mulligan was so about issuing serious reminders. How quickly things can change in racing. After taking Mr Mulligan out on a gallop re-

cently, McCoy had filed an adverse report on the chestnut gelding. The response of Mr Mulligan's trainer. Noel Chance, had been that not much notice should be paid to the horse's efforts in prepara-

"Noel told me not to worry," McCoy said happily. And sure enough when I galloped the horse last Wednesday he real-

ly flew. Mind you, there was also

meeting last year when Mr Mulligan hit the first fence so ohviously enjoying his work that McCoy didn't have to think that he had to make up at least hard in the Sun Alliance Chase 15 lengths just to get back into the race. On a day of bright sunshine

and heaving, excited crowds Mr Mulligan ran as though a glance at the odds of 20-1 had left him in despair of rational In truth Mr Mulligan was

never really threatened. Duhlin Fiver pulled up and second-placed Barton Bank was all of nine lengths adrift of the win-

Instead of the thunderous reception Danoli would have received there was a sense of anti-climax. Strange that, But the memory of a bad experience then, racing was never meant to at Cheltenham in the Festival

4.10 Charter Lane 4.40 Formidable Partner 5.10 Air Commodore 2.10 Wordsmith 240 Arise 3.40 KINTAVI (nap) GOING: Good [watering]. Left-hand course, Run-in of 200yd. Left-hand course, Run-in of 200yd. Course is S of town of B1146. ADMISSION: Members 510; Grandstand & Paddock (accompanied under-16s free all enclosures) CAR PARK: Members 56; rest free. LEADING TRAINERS WITH BUNNERS: O Brennau = 13 winners from 35 runners at 3 rain of 37.1% giving a return to a 51 level stake of +532.48; D. Gandolfo = 8 winners, 0 runners, 56.7%, +511.70; Mrs D. Hafme = 5 winners, 22 runners, 22.7%, +57.66; LEADING JOCKEYS: Martin Brennau = 12 winners, 45 rides, 23.28.1%, +513.73; R. Duswoody = 16 winners, 8 rides, 31.2%, -50.17; A. McCarthy = 4 winners, 14 tides, 23.6%, +53.50; Mr. M. Armytnige = 3 winners, 7 rides, 42.9%, +53.25. BLINKERED FIRST TOME: Antignan Pyer (viscord) (2.10), Lodestone Lud (3.10) with interest in The LAST SEVEN DAYS: None

PAKENHAND CONTROL OF THE PARTY.

LONG-DISTANCE ELYMPERS: Tellmorky (2.40) & Reservation Bock (5.10) sent 271 miles by T Hind from Lymon, Devon. 2.10 WYMONDHAM SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS G) £4,000 added 2m Penalty Value £2,785

BETTING: 9-2 Nagobella, 5-1 Ruffes Guestle, 11-2 Wordeniffs, 6-1 Cosmic Star, 13-2 Pyrthic Dence, 7-1 Arch Angel, 6-1 Coddy's First, 10-1 Blue Domaio, 12-1 General Shirtey, 14-1 Hoppy Brave, 26-1 Antigan Piyer, 25-1 Raf.

FORM CURDE FORM GUIDE

RUTH'S GAMBLE, second to Tengo Man at Ludow last month, went one better here nine days later with a three-length success from Negobella. Negobella again ran well to be third of 16 to Calway Boss at Warwick last time and has a 4th pull with Ruth's Gamble, but the selection can again come out to rop. Fourth in Ruth's Gamble are west showing Sousse, who came out to win at Doncaster eight days later, with Arch Angle beaten about seven and a half lengths in fourth. A formine through Sousse suggests Arch Angle is held by Ruth's Gamble and Negobella, but that wither is not reliable and the Doncaster form is working out well, with Receivank Rose and Hawanelottewing won since.

Selection: RUTH'S GAMBLE

	2.40	WILLIAM CHASE (C	BULWER-LONG LASS H) £3,50	MEMORIAL 0 added 2m 5	NOVICE f 110vds	HUNTER
1			Bouter) A Varcy B 11 9			
2			E (15) (BF) (Str Michael			
3	2/01036-	F00090W (345)	(J M Tumer) J Tumer 7 :	119	Mr /	Sensome (5)
4			B D E H Turner) Mrs D Tu			
5			ICH (190) Union Whyter.			
6	/SP/24-5	BYPSY HONG (2	3) (Mrs Nigel Whatmon) (Cooper 9 11 9		.Mr A Coe (7)
7	04F2#F-	OLD DUMDALK	(1781) (R Oliver Smith)	Ned King 13 119	N	IN KING (7) 8
8	2/33436-	RAYMAN (291)	(Miss Julie Naylor) A Tree	obel 9 11 9		R Lawther (7)
9	PP-U	TELLAPORKY (4	9 (T Hand) THind 8 11 9			Middleton (7)
10		TRY GOD (F Alls	in) Mas Louise Allen 10 .	119	M	ing L. Attan (7)
11		WHAT CHANCE	(Mrs Helen Mobiley) Mrs - 11 deci		Mr A Cha	rior-Jones (7)
_						

BEXTING: 7-4 Arise, 9-4 Broad Steams, 5-1 Gypsy King, 3-1 What A Chance, 10-1 Fordow, 16-1 Galrig, 20-1 Gone For Lunch, 26-1 Rayman, Try Bod, 50-1 others. 1996: Pro-Bono 6 11 2 Mr A Sansome 3-1 (P C Coudwell) 13 mn

FORM GUIDE

ARSE may be flattered by his proximity to Cab On Target Isecond at Chefreinham yesterday in a course and distance humbers chase, but the fact remains that he was only run out of it close home and instance humbers chase, but the fact remains that he was only run out of it close home and instance well car of the thruit. He was beaten ten lengths in a confined at Berbury Castle subsequently but is well worth a chance in this grade on that earlier shown the Broad Steepen whence of five beat-showners, fursished that in Betchstance at Humbering, broads Steland, where of the posit-to-points, trusted that to bitotaming at Hulling-tion table lest month on trees a big duriger on that evidence. Sypay (lag will also go close if in something approaching the form that saw him run Sheer Jest to five lengths here last season. He will have benefited from last mortal's Follestione return. Footbow, formerly with Other Shewood, needs to uniquove on what he has actived in two points so far, but What A Chance has some for form in ledies' races and can go well. Selection: ARISE

[3.10	JEWSON HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £6,500 added 2m 5f 110yds Penalty Value £4,335		
1	15-2112	HAWAMAN YOUTH (S) (D) (SF) (G Revious) G McCourt 9 11 10		
2	421-P16	ARTIC WINGS (13) (CD) (Lady Anne Bertanck) O Brennan 9 11 9M Brentan		
3	55-3635	PATS MENSTREL (84) (N.J. Hunt) R Champion 11 11 4A Dobble		
4	PP5132	WISPPERS DELIGRIT (28) (D) (S P 7ndat) G Charles-Jones 9 10 10		
S	31-P-0P	LODESTONE LAD (17) (CD) (Mrs D L Wesver) R Dickn 7 10 0D Leaky V		
		- 5 declared -		
Minimum welste: 10st. True handican welste: Lobestone Lad 9st 12th.				

BETTING evens Howalian Youth, 11-4 Artic Wings, 4 Whippers Delight, 10 Pais Minstrel, 16 Ladestone Lad. 1996; Boston Rover 11 11 2 M Brennen 3-1 (O Brennen) 6 ran

1898: Boston Rover 11 11 2 M Bernnan 3-1 (0 Bernnan 5 ran FORM GURDE

HAWASIAN YOUTH is in great form and should gain his third win from five starts this seeson, having finished numer-up in the other two. After a couple of Windson successes, Graham McCourt's nine-year-old found an on-song Senor 1. Berturdi just too good at Wincandon
lest week. He still finished well dear of the remainder and is 25 lb well in compared to his revised rating. Articl Wings put behind her a poor Stranford reappearence to beat Whitippers
Delight seven lengths over three miles here lest month. The mare flopped again at Doncaster lest time, but she was velue for more than the official margin over Whitippers Delight
fiving again has Xawer Azpuru talong off 7(b), yet is only 5th worse in. Pats Ministrel has
ent been out sonce firsting a well-beatan fifth at Herdman in Docember, whate Lodestonie
Lad is difficult to fancy on recent evidence, although a visor (he has worn binkers before)
may help.

Invader 5.20 Genuine John

BLINEBERD FIRST TIME: Noble Canonire (2.20), Classic Vic-tory (visred) (2.50), Sarasi (2.50), Warp Drive (4.20). WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DATS; None.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DATS: None. LONG-DISTANCE EUNNERS: Mono Ledy (2:20) & Natal Ridge (2:50) have been sent 173 miles by D Haydn Jones from Efail (saf.)

2.20 ZEUS APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,500 added 1m 4f

040060- MAY 10NG MAYHEM (146) Mis A King 4 7 10 P Doe (5) B

16 020060- MAY KING MAYNEN (JAR) Mcs. A Ving 4 7 10....P Doc (5) 8
17 070060- MORTHERN CHARRIER (SR7) E Alenn S 7 10...P Doc (5) 8
- 17 decianed Affairmun weight: 7st 10it. Time handleap weights: May King Mayhem 7st 7b.
Notyteen Charmer 7st.
SETURIO: 5-1 Martinn, 11-2 Wildlife, 6-1 Minumantyca Girl, 7-1 Carol Again,
8-1 Heste La Vista, 10-1 Dirab, Heighth Of Farme, 12-1 Mr Speculator,
14-1 Minus Lady, Zeitopek, Moormalding, Iran A Dreumer, 20-1 Wolde Canonbire, Mazzerk, 25-1 Johnsle The Joker 33-1 others

250 APHRODITE CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS E) (DIV I) £3,600 added 1m

3.40 DOWNHAM MARKET HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £5,500 added 2m Penalty Value £3,697

FORM GUIDE

KINTAVI has not run a bad race this season and will be difficult to beat. His two-length second to Sheriffmuir at Lecester last month has worked out well and he easily beat Ajdar by ten lengths here subsequently, with Irish Emerald, returning from a long obsence, well both fourth. Even though he was raised 3th, Ruttavi can another good race to be third to Desert Mountain at Stratford on Moncay and may not need to improve on that to win this. Barford Sovereign is also in good form, hasting won face (2m45) in December by an easy time lengths from Pedaltothernesis. She was begien just over seven lengths in fourth to Sharing Edge at from Pedaltobrements. She was beaten just over seven lengths in fourth to Shring Edge at Dordester last time and the main doubt is the timp, which may well prove too sharp, Isalah hopped all Formwell lest bine, but that was over an extra quanter of a mile on roch gound and this front-numer can do better over this sharp two. Lack of a recommendation in timp of 15 to Mellow Master at Huntingdon last time and is certainly not out of it even though 2to out of Mellow Master at Huntingdon last time and is certainly not out of it even though 2to out of

	4.10	CASTLEACRE MAIDEN CHASE (CLASS D) £5,100 added 3m 110yds Penalty Value £3,417
1	00-0603	CHARTER LANE (28) (IA'S A Emanuel: Mrs L Jesrell 7 11 5
2	PP-0632	DESPERATE DAYS (IA) Fred Ratin F Nath, 8 11 5
3	440-3P	GLENDINE (35) IT W King C Mann 7 11 S Railtion
4	402002	JOLLY BOAT (11) NA J Sevan) F Jordan 10 11 5
5	50-544	MUSIC MASTER (15) At E T Davesi C Egerton 7 11 5 A Dobbin B
ō		SEABRIGHT SAGA (7) ID: L G Pany, ki Chapman 7 11 5
ī	4267F5	BROGEEN LADY IS 1Startigm Racing: D Gandotto 7 21 0
a	0000-F6	FIL GEF CSD (Part Invested Mrs. P Tourists, 7 51 9) Miss C Tourists (7)

FORM GUIDE

JOLLY BOAT may prove the salest oppon. Winner of eight point-to-points over the past three seasons, he has managed some creditable runs under rules this term, notably seconds to finch Emperor at Luddow in January and his most recent 11-length defeat by highbeath at Doncaster Broggen Lady would be the choice judged on the pick of her form, a seven-length tourin to Credio is lung at Towester on her return and debut over regulation fences in December, Her form has gone the wrong any since though and she weakened quickly once headed two out in Him Of Prace's Towester race lest time, Music Master has shown required in humans, and next burlies to eater circulations on the cheener debut, but be did enough in bumpers and over burdles to enter calculations on this chasing debut, but he did not look keen in tirst-time blinkers on his larest run. Selection: JOLLY BOAT

4.40 HOLKHAM CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £2,500 added 2m Penalty Value £1,838

1996: Lidly Turky 5 11 6 S Fts. 12-1 of P Jentins 10 ton
Florid, a smart middle-distance performer for Horny Cacil on the Rat, has had his problems since being put over hundles. He reportedly gurged on his debut at Sandown when a meltipeaten tourth to Deuble Symptony, retured to race in the Yingsel Hurdle at Wincanton are that and set too strong a page when only eight to Green Green Decor at Luddow. Fith at Luddow, some 16 lengths sinead of Florid, was 50-1 chance FORMIDABLE PARTINER. That was an improved eited even though he had finished clinser up in his previous runs at Cathenck and Musselburgh and the application of a user has worked well. With Flend beef watched, he doubt be good enough. The Stuffed Puffin, hith to Talatham at Wincamon bays time, should be able to suprove but a higger threat may be Meyra, titst past the post in a male maden at Musselburgh as a juneate in Rovember 1994 on his only, sent for Alec.

Selections FORMIDABLE PARTILER.

5.10	0	HOLKHAM CONOITIONAL JOCKEYS' MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV III £2,500 added 2m Penalty Value £1,831
1	p٠.	ACERBUS DIALCIS (809) (George II: Hücke M Orumon 6 11 8 F Leahy
2 00		AIR COMMODORE (IV H Prospers) & Arburnot E & 8 D J Kavanach
3 00	150	HOLKHAM BRY (15) 1. V. bribrytham: L. Wordingham 5 1.1 c
4		RESERVATION ROCK & Progrif Hard 6 11 8 A Bates
5 24	155	WENTWORTH (USA) (21) (Mos / Newell) C Thomer 5 11 8 Clare Thomer
ů	P	GENERALIX RD () P M & J W Cook! S Melor 4 11 0
7		MUHANDAM Alts Diago Hame: Nts B Hare 4 11 U
8		CREDITE RISQUE -Ones core Monst J Glover - 10 9 R Massey

— в оссыте — BETTING: 6-4 Air Commodore, 7-4 Wentworth, 6-1 Muhandam, 10-1 Credite Risque, Acerbus Dul cis, 20-1 Reservation Rock, 25-1 Geneross. 33-1 Holitham Buy 1996: See Pay I.

AIR COMMODORE, successful four times over a mile for Paul Colo, showed he retains his ability for present connections after reportedly suffering an intruty by finishing stard of 10 to Afful Dane in a valuable Newbur, handicap in September. Starman will not be a problem over a sharp now miles like this and he should make a wanning debut over hundles. Wentworth showed plenty of ability in bumpers belate his hundling debut at hemoton last month when Graham Thomer's fixe-year-old hisshed a highly creditable little to Wade Road healen about ten lengths. He should certainly tan face shoult under but may just und Air Commodore too speech today, Muhandam was only a moderate maden for Ben Hambury on the Flat bot still appeals more than tellow recruit Credite Risque, who has not been out stille Apol, Reservation Rock has not run for 32 mornis and at least Acerbus Dulius is hit from the all-weather, but it will be a surpose if they figure.

RACING RESULTS

2.00.1. COMMANCIE COURT IN Wilderson 9-1: 2. Circus Star 40-1: 3. Shooting Light 7-1: 4. L'Opoca 11-2. 28 ann. 9-2 is withte Sea. 1. 1-4. (T Width). Totat: 28. 70; £1.90. 17.50. £1.90, £1.50. DP: £301.70. CSP: £302.52. Incast: £2,425.80. Yac. £577.40. 2.35: 1. MARSH () DISSORIES 20.1. 27
ARLEN 25-1: 3. Paddy's Return 20-1. 17
ran. 9-2 tay Escensings (Ein), 27-2. (Mess
H Maglu, Tone: 26.80; 65.00; 65.70; 64.40.
DF: C219-60. CSF: 5309-73. Tiro: £1,000-50.
3.16: 1. MR MALLERSAN (AP MeCQ) 20-1:
2. Berton Bank 33-1; 3. Domass Pride 10-1.
14 ran. 4-1 fay Impensi Cal Instiad up), 9.
(Moel T Chance). Totas: £21.50; £4.30.
55.60, £4.10. DF: £296.50. CSF: £488.05.
Tro: £1,823.40. NR Addingson Boy.
3.55: 1. FANTUS (Mr I Muchell 10-1; 2.
Cab On Tenget 4-1 tay. 2. What A Hand 6-1.
18 ran. 17-1. I. R Barbert. Totas: £23.30;
£5.20. £2.20. £2.30. DF: £58.10. CSF:
£47.34. Tro: £80.40.
4.30: 1. UNCLE ERNE (G Bradley 20-1;
£1.50: £1.57.0. £3.0. E1.10. £40. £2.60.
DF: £1.45.70. CSF: £1.27.80. Trosser:
£3.014.11. Tro. £1.775.30.
5.05: 1. SPAROY GAYLE (B Story, 3-1 lay.

13.014.11. Tro. £1.775.30.

S.05:1. SPARNY GAYLE (B Sore): 3-1 tar.

S.Major Bedl 5-1: 3. Or Royal 4-1. 10 ras.

4. 2n. 10 Parten. Tota: £3.70: £1.50. £1.90.

£2.00. DF: £8.00. CSF: £17.28. Tro. £12.90.

\$4.01. 1 BARNA 809 (R Dursoco)): 14-1:

2. Carrier Brigande 13-2: 3. Penny A Day

15-2: 4. Black Quoen 12-1: 20 ras. 11-2:

\$10.80: £3.20. £2.10. £2.60. £3.00. DF.

£50.30. CSF: £10.97. Process £709.22. Tro.

£714.10. NP: Fronkeys Dr. Moules, Embell-

5214.10. NR: Econoris Du Mouth, Emper-ished, Kanastrof. lackpot: Not won; (1228, 233, 20 carned forward to Folkestone 1988; Placepot: £6.227.50. Quadpot: £1.40.80. Place 6: £10.807.30. Place 5: £5,374.30.

HEXHAM

2.25: 1. APOLLO'S DAUGHTER (F Userly)

5-1: 2. SAPPAR 25:-1: 3. Peggy Gordon 4-1

11 ran. 3-1 fav Quantar Profe (501), 13: 11:
(1 Goudding, Tota: 16:30, 11:50, 19:00, 12:00, 07: 11:21:10, CSF: £110.37, Teast: 2508.79 Tro: 2120.50. HEXHAM

RACING	SERV	ICES
0897 EVELEGISMES FOLKESTONE	26 TABLES 971	RESULTS 981
FAKENHAM	972	982 983
SOUTHWELL	973	98.

3.00: 1. RALLEGRO (6 Carbit) 10-11 tov.
2. Exampler 6-1: 3. Tapastch 7-4. 8 cm. 1%,
3. (7 Mordarth). Totale £1.50; £1.00, £1.80,
£2.70. Dr.: £6.10. CSF: £7.51.
3.85: 1. HUDSON BAY TRADER (6 Grattart 10-1: 2. Off The Brn 2-1 fox 3. Gold
Pigeon 5-1. 8 cm. 1%, 3. (7 Beaumon).
Total: £1.100; £2.70, £1.40, £1.80. Dr.
£8.30. CSF: £30.00. Tracest £106.78.
4.06: £1. MARPIE MELODY (7 Supple)
11-4; 2. Pebble Beach 6-1; 3. Southern
Cross 9-4 bw, 12 cm. 2. 3%, 6 Lungh. Total
£1.40, £2.40, £2.30, £1.70. Dr.: £22.00.
CSF: £29.95. Troc: £27.70.
4.40: £1. GRILLANE LAKE (R Supple) 6-1;
2. Willie Spande 12-1: 3. Snooth Point 20-1
12 ran. 13-8 for Parish Junsested Rizer, 8,
11. (Jass M Matigen). Total £11.30, £2.00,
£2.70, £8.00. Dr.: £21.50. CSF: £78.98. Trocest: £1,331.18. Troc: £11.50.0.
5.15: 1. GORRIELD (N. Johnson) 12-1; 2.
Five Flags 6-1: 3. The Other Man 10-1. 11
ran. 3-1 for Merrisone (5th). 1%, ki, S Bell.
Total: £20.30; £4.10, £2.40, £1.70. Dr.:
£58.80, CSF: £84.3, Trocest: £71.08.2 Total
£14.30; £52.70 of to Southwell £2.00 today.
Place & £262.18. Place S: £258.

RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Brogeen Lady (Fakenham 4.10) NB: Bailieborough Boy (Southwell 4.20)

LINGFIELD

2.15: 1. ROMAN REEL (Mrs.) Moore) 13-2;
2. Dreams Carrier 9-2; 3. Love Legand 20-1.
10 non. 4-1 two Bys (4th), 4, 3; 61. Moore).
Total 69.50: £1.260, £1.10, £3.90. Df:
£12.60. CSP. £32.25. Treast: £516.75. Tro
£24.90. NR: Transum Honds.

2.45: 1. IN THE MONEY (D Goffms) 7-4
tar 2. Exholoron Mixton 9-2; 3. Minter As-2.45: 1. IN THE MODILEY ID GRIDDS 1-4-tor; 2. Fabriloson Microto 9-2: 3. Microto 5-1.7 ran. 4; 3½ (R Hollinshead). Tota: 2-20: 51.20: 53.70. DF: 54.30. CSF: 59.57. 3.20: 1. ENTLON (W Ryen) 5-2 for; 2. Greathest 7-2: 3. Spenner's Rowenge 10-1. 9 ran. 3½, ½ (C Britain). Tota: 53.00: £1.90, £1.50. £1.50. DF: £22.10. CSF: £11.05. Tros £4.30. MR: Our Studies.

9 ran. 39.7. % (C STREEN). 108. S. 50. 1. 150. 151. 50. DF: 512.10. CSF: 511.05. Tex. 51.50. NR: Our Shadee. 3.50: 1. SHONTAIME (Daan McKenard). 12. 2. Medicas 11.-8 fay: 3. Justinianus 7-1. 8 nn. %. %. (M Johnston). Toke: 51.90; £1.90. £1.00. DF: £4.40. CSF: £12.34. 4.20: 1. SECHET ALY (M Roan) 8-1; 2. Prince Danzig 12-1; 3. Tailulah Belle 15-2. 12. ran. 4.1 fay Renown (Sth). Mk, 1%. C Gettam). Toke: £10.30; £3.70, £2.90, £4.70. DF: £46.40, CSF: £102.47. Treast: 5708.99; Teo: £311.30; £43.86 carried forward to Southwell 2.20 today. 4.50: 1. TWORTS GRAB HIRE (Martin David) 3-1: 2. Saily Sinde 6-1: 3. G La High 1: 7 non. 2-1 fay Bourdiffe Gange. Mk, 10. Mk twoy). Toke: £4.30; £1.50, £3.30. DF: £16.90. CSF: £21.56. 5.20: 1. DON'T DROP BOARDS (Miss.) Felden 7-2 fay: 2. Emstelejh 5-1; 3. Gradge 11-1. 30 ran. 1%, 2%, (O Thom). Sandge 11-1. 10 ran. 1%, 2%, (O Thom). CSF: £19.80. Tucset: £164.92. Thu: £21.70. Placespot: £154.60. Quadpot: £45.50. Placespot: £154.60. Quadpot: £45.50. Placespot: £154.60. Quadpot: £45.50.

SOUTHWELL 3.20 APOLLO MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 370 6f 2.20 Wildfire 2.50 Live Project 3.20 Saratoga 3.50 V I P Chartie 4.20 Aspecto Lad 4.50 Desert Invador Suza. GOING: Standard. STALLS: Inside. STALLS: 50U SHORMON RID (28A) W COMMENS O LIBERT O CHRISTIAN O TO THE STATE OF THE STATE OF

3.50 ACHILLES HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,325 added 3YO 6f EFTING: 6-4 V I P Charlie, 5-2 The Wyandotte Ion, 11-4 Plan For Prof-

4.20 SOUTHWELL SELLING SERIES FINAL HCAP (CLASS E) £6,000 added 3YO 1m 44-3430 ROCHEA (11) Mrs N Macoue, 8 10 ______ A Clark 3 V 61-3261 HEAD GRR, (32) (CD) C Thomas 8 9 Dean McKeown 6 0 6-25 Mark Denne (23) W Mark 8 7 ______ Denne (Phole 6 2 321465 MIRROR FOUR SPORT (11) (CD) M Johnson 8 - IK Sked (7) 7 - 7 declared -BETTING: 11.4 Ballisborough Boy. 3-1 Aspecto Lad. 4-1 Martirew, 5-1 Warp Drive, 6-1 Mirror Four Sport, 7-1 Head Girl. 20-1 Roches

4.50 APHRODITE CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS E) (DIV II) £3,600 added 1m

005312 NORTHERN FAN (9) (CD) N Invier S 2 6... Denn McNeown 3 02000-0 ROAR ON TOUR (24) (C) Mrs I/ Revelor 8 9 5.A Culture 1 B 066334 DESIRT INVADER (5) (CD) D Chapman 6 9 5... A Culture 5 006000 SQUARE DEAL (FR) (101) (C) 5 Source 6 9 S ... 5 Webster 6 #22 EUROLINK THE LAD (42) (D) D Burdhel 10 9 4 ... 5 Drowne 2 6-1 Roar On Tour. 8-1 Jack The Lad, 12-1 Major Mouse, 14-1 Square Deal,

5.20 NEPTUNE MAIDEN HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added 7f

DETEND: 11-4 Live Project, 3-1 Soldier Cove, 4-1 Second, 5-1 Flog Fea., 8-1 Second Device, 10-1 Devid James Sirl, 13-1 Natal Ridge, 14-1 First Gold, 25-1 others GETTING: 7-4 Genuine John, 3-1 Will Do. 7-2 Sphished, 4-1 Evening J Parts, 10-1 Misky Boy, 14-1 Waldey Grange Boy

FOLKESTONE

2.00 Whispering Dawn 2.30 Sir Leonard (nb) Sharpical 3.30 Coolteen Hero 4.00 Swinging ties 4.30 Royal Saxon 5.00 Polo Ridge

GOING: Hurdles - Good (Good to Soft in places): Chases -Right-hand, undulating course with a run-in of one furle Course is 6m west of your 141 A.O. Westerhanger rail is SIS RACING BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Prassian Eagle (2 00); Rustle

14 (00). WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Non-LONG-DISTANCE BUNNERS: Royal Saxon (4 30) & Gow-er-Slave (5,00) have been sent 313 miles by P Bowen from Haver-2.00 SANDGATE CLAIMING HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,575 added mares 2m 1f 110yds

OP PRUSSIAN EAGLE (102) M Brodstok 5 11 12 P Holley B 305605 PEDALTOTHEMETAL (11) P Millorett 5 11 3 G Tormey 977034 LAURA LYE (51) 5 De Haan 7 11 0 Deborde 0345 WHISPERENS DAWN (7) C Broks 4 10 11 B Brodley 15500 MENSTER'S MADAM (16) (DI) Neville 6 10 11 .. A P McCoy 3FO FLASH IN THE PAN (S1) / Moore 4 10 3 ___ W McFartand 90 CLASSIC DELICAT (96) I Campbeb 4 10 0 ___ Wr R Barrett

5-1 Flash in The Pea, 12-1 Laura Lye, 16-1 Uoni, 20-1 others 2.30 WHITELAW GOLD CUP NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £4,950 added 3m 2f

25-15 BOND MR (97) (D) P Nations 8 11 11 R Johnson 43-441 PUPPANCE (28) N Gaseler 7 11 11 Clientelyn 6F46-11 HIGH LEARIE (15) A Have, 7 11 11 J. J. A McCarthy

- 7 decimed -SETTING: 13-8 Sir Leonard, 2-1 High Lewie, 7-2 Bood Jre. 10-1 Flippance, 3.00 SOMERFIELD COURT NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 2m 1f 110yds

BETTING: 2-7 Sharpicol, 11-2 Leap Frog. 8-1 Fire On Ice, 14-1 Hanbitooti, 18-1 Hi Marbie, Rising Mon. 20-1 Kirov Royal, 25-1 Savert Remark. 33-1

	3.30 CLIFTONVILLE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £4,950 added 2m
3.00 Six-	1 214013 NEWLANDS-GENERAL (13) (b) Pictoris 11 11 10 A P MoDoy 2 UF122-P PHARSUK (36) (b) T Mod 5 10 13 L
tional ong.	- 5 declared - Minmum weight: 1cd. The manage weight, Contech Hert. St. 115. BETTMIC: 13-8 Newtand-General, 100-30 The Cannot Man, 4-1 Contech Hero, 9-2 Lasota. 10-1 Phoreits
MIS- Free.	4.00 PEASMARSH SELLING H'CAP HUROLE (CLASS G) £2,375 added 2m 1f 110yds
	1 611-520 MOYNISHA HOUSE (329) (20) 8 Code: 9 12 û 8 Fenton 0-340-19 MULLINFOR (22) R Rove 6 11 11
Gent	1 (000-5 SWINGING SOUTHES (23) G Macro 6 11 5 A P McCoy 5 PP PFF1 CARACOL (32) 1 Navie 8 10 13

4.30 FAIR ROSAMUND HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £3,475 added 3m 2f

Rubins Boy, 20-1 Joher Jack, Nildus Pet, 33-1 Little Rouley 5.00 H.B.L.B. MAIDEN OPEN NH FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m If 110yds

30 GOLDEN LELY (13) Mass Ga, Maderian 4 19 A. . . . A P Macco

BETTING: 7-4 Sunday Venture, 7-2 Sweep Clean, 5-1 Shebang, 6-1 Polo Ridge, 10-1 Core Call, Pure Swing, 12-1 Silver Strocco, 14-1 Ring Of Swing, 16-1 Legges Legacy, 20-1 others

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP: England and Scotland powerhouses can impress Lions selectors

Sleightholme's outside chance

on Sleightholme is very much looking forward to his early summer sojourn in Argentina, where the prospect of two more international caps and a night or three on the Bucnos Aires tiles with his Bath club-mates, Federico Mendez and German Llanes, are among the obvious highlights of the trip. What is not so obvious is why England's right wing is, as things stand, likely to hoard a mid-May plane to South America rather than one to South Africa.

When Fran Cotton and his comrades on the Lions selection panel named their now infamous 62-man preliminary party last month, they chose to disregard England's threequarter line in its entirety. The inevitable slanging match centred on whether or not Will Carling had demanded the captaincy in return for his avail-ability and to what extent Phil de Glanville, the national captain, was omitted because of incompatible personalities rather than indifferent performance

the subject of Sleightholme and his partner on the left wing, Tony Underwood, even though they had just given the Irish back division a fearful seeing-to in Dublin to the tune of two tries apicce, Underwood always looked vulnerable in the light of Cotton's professed partiality towards power freaks rather than out-and-out speed freaks. But Sleightholme? Fourteen and a half stones of get up and go would surely he priceless on the killing fields of Ellis Park and Loftus Versfeld, so why should the Lions go for a walking bicep like John Bentley, just back from rugby league and only a handful of games into his reincarnation as a union man at Newcastle, rather than Jack

Barely a word was heard on

Chris Hewett talks to the wing with a mission against Wales tomorrow

"We're not picking on size," Cotton insists. "Pace and power are two very important qualities but size is not an issue at all. People prohably got that from the Bentley-Sleightholme husiness. Sleights is a strong sort but Bentley happens to be that little hit bigger. That's not the reasoning behind our current thinking, though; there are other differences we consider to be

Now what might they be? True, Sleightholme is not the world's finest at defending against a cultured outside-half's rolling diagonal kicks and he has heen known to succumb to the odd rush of blood in dodgy loose-ball situations. But in virtually every other area of his game, whether it be chasing high bombs like a pointer on heat. manufacturing a narrow-channel kick to turn an opponent. tackling some monstrous Lomucsque apparition to a stand-still or finishing a half-chance at the corner in true Rory Underwood fashion, he is right up there with the hest of British.

Tomorrow, the 24-year-old from way up there on the North York Moors has one last opportunity to book himself in for trial by Springbok rather than Puma. He wins his 10th cap against the Welsh in Cardiff -"No, I've never played at the National Stadium but I've heard plenty about it" - and any addition to his quartet of international tries will be precious grist to the mill, particularly as he will be squaring up to an ear-Lions contender in Brldgend's Gareth Thomas. "It's all I can do, isn't it? Play

well. Ask questions of the op-

position, threaten them when I save the chance and keep it tight and tidy at the back. If it works, if my performance says to the Lions panel, 'Hey, we can't leave this bloke out', then fine. But in the end, it's all a matter of someone else's opinion, so I'm not letting it prey on

"If I don't make it to South Africa, then I'll take every ounce of experience and enjoyment I can from Argentina with the remains of the England side. That will be a tough tour in itself and 'Fred' Mendez has promised to look after me and show me the sights, which makes it even tougher. Although I'll chalk up two complete Five Nations' Championships against Wales, I'm still relatively new to this level of rugby and while I'd love to face the Boks, I'm young enough to think about the next tour in

three or four years' time. Such equanimity is a mark of Sleightholme's enviably wellbalanced attitude to the slings and arrows of a fickle sport. The merest glimpse of him hollering out the national anthem on big match day, right hand squeez-ing the fibres from the red rose sewn on the left breast of his precious England shirt, suggests more than a degree of rampant fanaticism. Nothing

could be further from the truth. "I think I'm lucky in so far as I can cope with the nerves pretty well and focus totally on the job in hand. I get nervous, of course - very much so in the minutes leading up to a game - hut there is no element of ap-prehension in that, so the feeling is entirely positive. Certainly, the thought of playing at the Arms Park on such an occasion can only be inspira-

The last time he went anywhere near tomorrow's venue, the rumour mill was humming to suggestions that Bath were



ightholme: Surprise omission from preliminary Lions squad

about to lose their most effective try-poacher to Cardiff. The English champions' insistence on playing Jason Robinson, a rugby league recruit, on the right wing added fuel to the flames and when Sleightholme

from the Heineken Cup quarter-final between the two clubs, the story seemed on the verge of confirmation.

"That's what I mean by stay-ing focused," he says. "You have to rise above all that. I

came from but I couldn't help so rife. I've had my ups and downs this season, what with se-

hut be aware of them, they were lection at Bath and the Lions is sue, but the only thing that really matters right now is Wales and how to beat them."

Merson to be out of action for six weeks

Football ADAM SZRETER

Paul Merson will be out of the game for up to six weeks after a hernia operation yesterday. As well as missing several games for Arsenal, he will also be unavailable for England's friendly against Mexico at Wembley on 29 March.

Arsenal are playing down a report they are to sign Black-burn's Graeme Le Saux for £4m. The former Chelsea defender is reportedly keen to return to London, but his former manager, Kenny Dalglish, is also believed to be interested in signing him for Newcastle. Liverpool were disappointed

esterday by news that the Polsh international striker Marek Citko, with whom they had hoped to have talks about a £2.5m move from Widzew Lodz, has been ruled out for a fortnight with an ankle injury. There will now be no deal before the trans-

fer deadline later this month. Manchester United are re-fusing to reveal the contents of a letter sent in reply to the Foot-ball Association's demand for reconciliation between their goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel and Ian Wright. The Arsenal striker responded swiftly to the FA's directive that he and Schmeichel should make up after their Tel Aviv defender Gadi Bromer has flown back to Israel after a trial at United, whose manager, Alex Ferguson, is saying that a £2m signing is not imminent.
Nottingham Forest's Bryan

Roy is facing disciplinary action after a row with the club's gen-

Dutch striker reacted angrily to being substituted in Tuesday's 1-1 draw at Blackburn. "Bryan is now looking at a possible fine," Bas-sett said. It has been reported that Roy may lose as much as £6,000.

Manchester City have signed the Dutch Under-21 defender Gerard Wiekens from the Dutch Second Division side Veendam for £800,000. Aston Villa have turned down a £2m bid from Derby to take the striker Tommy Johnson back to the Baseball Ground. Bolton have offered cash plus players for the £2.5m-rated Stoke striker Mike Sheron.

The Italian captain, Paolo

Maldini, has denied fresh spec-ulation linking him with Chelsea. The Milan left-back admitted that the Chelsea manager, Ruud Gullit, and Milan's acting president, Adriano Gal-"ring one another regularly, but as far as I know there has never been an official or serious offer from any club. My contract runs out in the year 2001 and I intend to stay at Milan, but of course it takes two parties to settle these matters." The Wales manager, Bobby Gould, has recalled West Ham's Mark Bowen, David Phillips of Nottingham Forest and Middlesbrough's Clayton Blackmore but there is still oo room for Ian Rush in the squad for the World Cup qualifying match against Beigium in Cardiff on 29 March.

Wainwright's high hopes for Scotland

captain, believes his side can reneat their victory of two years ago against France at Parc des Princes in their final match of this season's Five Nations' Championship tomorrow.

Rowell's favourite wide man?

There is the same sort of feeling in the squad that we had two years ago. We're going out there to do a job we're capable of doing," he said before boarding the team's flight to Paris. There will be a lot of pub-

lic expectation hanging over the French. But we helieve we can win this game and we're going to put pressure on ourselves to achieve this goal."

This will he Wainwright's second successive game back in his preferred position at hlindside flanker. "I'm enjoying being back in my old berth and what is more, Peter Walton is playing well at No 8. Against Ireland the whole balance of the

team seemed right.
"I'm looking forward to another game with the same formation and the only other time I played at the Parc was two years ago and we got a good result."

Rughy Union's official patron. the Princess Royal no less, in the equestrian field of one-day eventing. So he knows a thing

or two about the challenge of the big fences. It is just as well. Sporting hurdles do not come much higger than the one that will confront the Scottish XV and the horseman-turned-thoroughbred-lock at the Parc des Princes tomorrow afternoon.

It is just as well, too, that Weir happens to be an equable sort. The news that France, in their fareweil international at the Pare will be looking to secure "Grand Chelem" on home soil for the first time, failed to knock the sanguine Scot out of his stride. "I didn't realise that." Weir said. "It means the pressure is going to be on them from the start. And Scotland have always enjoyed being the underdogs, haven't they? We'll relish the challenge." It is the third time Scotland

have gone into their final Five Nations match with a Grand Slam riding on the outcome. Unlike the Calcutta Cup games

Doddie Weir happens to be a of 1995 and 1996, however, it is Rob Wainwright, Scotland's one-time rival of the Scotlish neither theirs to be won nor (as the right boot of Roh Andrew and the mauling arms of Dean Richards respectively dictated) theirs to he lost.

Disappointing though that may be, at the end of a season in which Scotland's sole redemption may be the record 34-10 slaughter of the sorry Irish at Murrayfield a fortnight ago, Weir cannot hide his relish for

the spoiling mission.
"We've got nothing to lose."
he said. "We can throw everything into it. We did quite well against Ireland but we can't say we've turned a corner yet. The main thing was that we were able to concentrate for 80 minutes. If we can do that again in Paris. it might be quite a good day for us."

It was quite a day when Scotland last played in the Pare, two years ago. Weir and his teammates were singing and dancing with their kilted compatriors after the first Scottish success in Paris since a try by Jim Telfer. now Scotland's director of rugby, clinched victory at the Stade Colombes in 1969. Whether the Scots can poop

Simon Turnbull

Weir aiming to stifle French ambition

meets the Scottish lock looking to steal the show in Paris

the expected Parisian party oo Saturday will depend to a large extent on the large frame of Weir, who came under Telfer's tutorial wing after one of his pony club pais - the future Duke of Buccleuch - suggested he joined in the Sunday morning training for juniors at Melrose. The 6ft 7m Weir has stood out



Nations campaign, impressive in defeat against Wales and England as well as in the victory against Ireland, in which he pirouetted through the green-shirted pack to claim his fourth international try. That last tour de force followed the not inconsiderable feat of eclipsing Martin Johnson in New-

castle's Pilkington Cup quarter-final defeat against Leicester. At 26 Weir is, as the Scotland coach, Richie Dixon, put it last week, "looking the part and playing the part". Considering the affahle Borderer was dropped for the pre-Christmas Test against Italy, the flowering of his second-row talent has been quite a transformation.

Training as one of Rob Andrew's full-time Newcastle Falcons, often twice a day, has clearly been a catalyst. 'I'm fit-ter than I've ever been." Weir. who has won 10 of his 44 caps as a No 8, duly acknowledged. The fitness and form of the new model Weir is certain to be put to the test on Saturday by the man mountain the French

call "Massif Central". Olivier

as the conspicuous individual Merle is no lumbering former success of Scotland's futul Five lumberiack. The Gallic giant with size 17 feel can spring his upstretched hands 80cm from a standing jump in full kit. And, as Ricky Evans, the Wales prop still hopes to testify in court, even his forehead packs a mighty metaphorical punch.

"He's a hig lad and he uses his hulk very well," Weir said. "You don't like 20 stones running at you." Only a serious physical steamrollering, such as the un-smiling Merle is quite capable of administering, seems likely to prevent Scotland's line-out colossus from spending his summer as a Lion in South Africa. Not that the Tyne-based Weir is taking se-

lection for granted. "I know it's the old cliché." he said, "but I only take one game at a time. That's the way I am." So when Merle and his team-mates are celebrating or mourning their Grand Slam fate at no-side on Saturday, Nottingham - and not the Spring-boks - will be on Doddie Weir's mind. Like the other tartan legionnaires in Rob Andrew's Toon Army, he will be back on club duty on Sunday afternoon.

Wembley still Northern goal

were disinayed two seasons ago when they found themselves. hanished to the FA Carisberg Vase, when the Football Associatioo decided they were ineligible for the senior non-League lournament, the FA Umbro Trophy. Now, however, the prospect of two Northern League clubs al Wembley has

put an end to the disseot. Last season no Northern League side reached the last 16 of the Vase, which caused even more distress around Northumberland and County Durham. This term Bedlington Terriers fell by the wayside in the last eight but Whitby Town and Guisborough Town have both reached the semi-finals: in tomorrow's first-leg ties Guishorongh entertain North Ferriby while Whitby travel to

Surrey to take on Banstead. The two teams that enjoy home advantage in the secondleg ties tomorrow week look the best bets for a visit to Wembley on 10 May. Whitby's 4-2 home success over Easington on Tuesday means they have won 21 of Nene Park.

Non-League notebook, their 25 League games this season. They also reached the first round of the FA Cup - they lost 8-4 after extra time in a replay The proud clubs of the Feder- at Hull City. Paul Pitman scored ation Brewery Northern League a hat-trick in a game in which the Nationwide League side were flattered by their margin of victory.

Harry Dunn, Whitby's manager, has assembled a strong squad which also includes Mitch Cook, the former Scarborough manager, Laurie Pearson (ex-Hull City) and two former Darlington men: Andy Toman and John Borthwick. North Ferriby's progress to the last four has been led by two former Hull City strikers: Andy Flounders and Darren France. Flounders won a Vase winners' medal last season with another Northern . Conoties East League side, Brigg Town.

Brian Talbot, the former Arsenal, Ipswich and England .. midfielder, has not been put off management by his unhappy ex-periences at West Bromwich and Aldershot. He has taken over the helm at the struggling GM Vauxhall Conference club. Rushden & Diamonds, until the eod of the seasoo after Roger :? Ashby "moved upstairs" to become director of football at

Mellor's style has its merits

Sir: I disagree with Matt Tench's comment in his article on Danny Baker (8 March) that David Mellor's style on the Radio 5 Live phone-in programme Six-0-six is "pa-tronising" and disagree with his comparisons of Mellor to "a lord of the manor" talking to

I have always found David Mellor on Six-0-six to be a polite and friendly host who encourages callers to give their views, however unorthodox.

them teenagers - in a party an-

Nations Tournament in

Nicholls, Sally Gibson and Lisa

Bayliss (who is to be married

Hockey

BILL COLWILL

SPORTS LETTERS

is also conscious that three of the times by Great Britain. Leices-

and who speaks with equal patience and sincerity to either a tongue-tied hist-time caller or to an old hand from the Foothall Association.

David Mellor has, by most

people's standards, a posh voice and a broad vocabulary. These are not necessarily incompatible either with an interest in football or with sports broadcasting and it is to David Mellor's credit that he has not attempted to adjust to a more "blokeish" style which would indeed be patronising.
DAFYDD O WILLIAMS Tonbridge,

England coach looks to youth

aware of their abilities, and she

teams they will be meeting in

Vancouver - Canada, Ireland

er in Harare in August. She will

Maggie Souvave has named six and Japan - are in England's

uncapped players - four of pool in the World Cup Qualifi-

nounced yesterday for the Five wish to keep some of her options

during the period of the tour- the England Under-2I side last

nament). The coach is well summer, or the Olympian Jo

under wraps.

Armchair audience

Sir: As usual Alan Watkins has managed to cause a customary stir in his rughy column. In his opinion (11 March), most people see their rugby through the medium of television. I am sure, however, that these viewers would love to be at the Arms Park or Twickenham, etc. but for the searcity of tickets.

I see the issue of television coverage being important only inasmnch as games can be seen on terrestrial channels. This would then ensure the widest possible audience and help to maintain and improve

Mould - already capped 23

ter's 19-year-old Carol Voss

and Lisa Copeland, who is not

a regular member of the Slough

starting line-up, are less ex-

Copeland will hope to prove

her worth in the fifth round of

pected selections.

the current interest level in rugby union. I also wish Alan Watkins well on the trip he is apparently making to Twickenham this weekend. I, however, will be at Cardiff Arms Park, where I shall endeavour to sing Hen wlad fy nhadau for

Letters should be marked "For publication" and should contain daytime and evening phone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The In-dependent, 1 Canada Square, London E145DL. They may be shortened for reasons of space.

TODAY'S

NUMBER

CHRISTOPHER HARRHY

Wadebridge, Cornwall

No sex – we're Costa Rican

Costa Rica

Costa Rica's national squad have been hanned from having sex until after their current round of World Cup qualifiers. "I need all the players in full possession of their physical and mental faculties for the games against Mexico and the United States," said the team's Argentinian coach, Horacio Cordero, who

imposed the ban on his squad of 19. The players complained the sex ban was an invasion of their private lives, although some reluctantly accepted the coach's decision.

"Sex is normal and natural and from my point of view does not negatively affect the performance of an athlete," Oscar Ramirez, a player from Costa Rica's squad that went to the World Cup finals in Italy in 1990, said, adding that he and his wife had sex two or three times a week despite his having matches on Sundays and in midweek.

Costa Rica and Mexico meet on Sunday in a World Cup qualifier. Cordero said the sex ban would continue until Costa Rica's final qualifier on 23 March against the United States.

Whatever method of preparation Costa Rica's players used prior to last Sunday's friendly against Cameroon in San Jose, it worked. They won 5-0 with Paulo Cesar Wanchope, who is joining Derby County, hitting a hat-trick. The match kicked off 45 minutes late after frantic negotiations to prevent Cameroon's players taking strike action in a to Barcelona.



Jesus Gil y Gil, the outspoken president of Atletico Madrid, has been in the news again. He threatened to withdraw his club from the Spanish Cup before Wednesday's quarter-final second leg at Barcelona unless the Spanish football federation annulled suspensions imposed on three Atletico players. Juan Eduardo Es-naider, Diego Simeone and Delfi Geli.

All three players had been banned after various offences against Real Betis in a League game last weekend. Never one to understate his case. Gil called the bans "the greatest outrage in the history of Spanish football" on Tuesday. when he said his team would not play. However, Gil backed down the following day and ordered Atletico to travel ... Janeiro is a disgrace. Gil watched Milinko Pantic, the Ser-

bian striker, score four goals for Atleti-co-but still finish on the losing side. With Ronaldo hitting a bat-trick, Barcelona won 5-4 for a 7-6 aggregate victory.

Admira Wacker had last Saturday 5 1-1 Austrian League draw with FC Linz changed to a 3-0 defeat by the Austrian football federation on Monday because they had substituted too many players. Admira's coach, Kurt Garger, said he thought three outfield players plus the goalkeeper could be replaced, but Austrian rules say only three changes including a replacement keeper can be made in a League game. The infringe-ment went unnoticed by the referce, Stefan Messner: Admira are now two points adrift at the bottom of the table.

Paulo Mara, the coach of the Brazilian club, Itaperuna, was so incensed by the referee in a Rio de Janeiro championship match against Vasco da Gama oo Wednesday that he rain on the pitch, dropped his trousers and based his buttocks. Vasco won 3-2 with a late goal which was offside, according to laperum who had three players sent off.

"I went naked because I'm tired of working honestly only to be scandalensly robbed," Mata said, "Football in Rio de

the AEWHA Cup on Sunday. Of the uncapped players, the Vancouver starting next month. selection of Olton's 17-year-old when Slough entertain Leices-It is the first England squad ter. loswich meet the First Distriker Lucilla Wright, the leadsince the Atlanta Olympics. No special significance should ing National League goalscorvision leaders, Olton, VISIOR I CAGETS, ORIOR.
ENGLAND WOMEN'S SQUAD (Five Nations Tournement, Vencouver, 30 April to 4 Mayb: \$ Blasks, K Bowden, P Miller, J Moud. C vose 141 85/200 Lecester', K Brown, L Copeland, J Smith 148 Sleugh: T Callen, L Naucombo. C Roid Highery, N Ross, M Cavies and Sundo Califorder, L Wights Comm. Il Marsten-Smith (Cirtur), J Empson (Carterbur). be given to the absence of play- er, will cause lew surprises. ers like Jane Sixsmith. Mandy Nor will the choice of Purdy

Miller and Denise Marsten-

Smith, who were prominent in

The number of seconds left on the clock when Penny Hardarray scored with a difficult running shot to give basket-ball's Orlando Magic a 96-95 victory over the Houston Rockets. Orlando have won the last six meetings between the two clubs. He just made a great shot at the end," Richie Adubato, the Orlando coach said. "Sometimes it's just better to be lucky than good."

هكذا من الأصل

sport

Graveney takes on testing selection challenge



Cricket Correspondent

The worst kept secret in Enghish cricket was confirmed yesterday when David Gravency was appointed chairman of selectors. But if a lack of suitable candidates meant his election was a foregone conclusion, the addition of two current players, Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, to serve as selectors came

It could, however, be three, if the trio decide to continue to give

the captain a vote in selection, a decision thought to be about even money at present.

Gooch, of course, has done it all before having managed to combine being a player and selector last season. But if he professed to be comfortable with his dual role, it was not, apparently, always to the satisfaction of the previous chairman of selectors, Raymond Illingworth.

The main problem will be a logistical one and convening a meeting place for selectors playing in different parts of the country will not be for the geographically inept. Unless a satellite link-up can be organised or a spensor for weighty mobile phone bills found, the get-together before the third Test in July when the selectors will be coming from Southend,

captain) ought to keep the mo-torway police on their toes. It is a challenge, Graveney, now 44 and appointed until the end of February 1999, claims he is looking forward to. "I would like the season to start tomorrow," he said, perhaps forgetting

Headingley and Worcester (presuming Atherton is still

who will have to be encountered.

"It's a fantastic challenge and I can assure people that myself and the other selectors will work ability and the passion that will be necessary to beat Australia."

Gravency's appointment, along with those of Gatting and Gooch, to roles once though to be for ex-cricketers in their dotage, reflects a general move to involve those closest to the modern game. Only the trio's ties with various "rebel" tours to South Africa will raise eye-

find their present loyalty to English cricket a little too rich to swallow down whole.

In a change from their unoftirelessly to identify those with the ficial position a few months ago, the England Management Committee have decided that Graveney's position will be a salaried one. But although Tim Lamb, the chief executive of the England Cricket Board, would not divulge the amount, it is thought that he will have to take a commensurate cut in salary from his other job as general sec-retary of the Professional Crick-

eters' Association to offset any tax implications involved. Three months ago it was

thought that holding both positions would be incompatible. particularly if players needed to be disciplined. However, as such matters now rest squarely with Bob Bennett, the chairman of the EMC. Graveney's role is one of co-ordination and consensus dergoes an operation to repair or as he puts it: "Turning an 'I' a stress fracture of his lower or as he puts it: "Turning an 'I'

situation into a 'we' situation." He is said to be a player's man, although in truth he moves with equal facility between both dressing and committee rooms.

and he will bring a touch of Tony Blair-like ability to soothe those still uncertain about the changes going on around them.

Sussex will be without their highly rated left-arm paceman. Jason Lewry, for more than half of the 1997 season. Sussex were hoping that Lewry, who unback on Monday, would be fit by the middle of June. But the 25-year-old says he will not be able to resume light training until the end of June.

Smart

start for

Phillips

England's Van Phillips, wearing a tie and long-sleeved shirt be-

cause of a sponsorship deal, fired

a five-under-par 67 to lie just two

strokes behind Australian Peter

O'Malley after the first round of

the Portuguese Open at Arceira

yesterday. The 24-year-old from Maid-

enhead matched O'Malley's

seven birdies, but bogeys at

the fourth and eighth, both par

threes, dropped him into a share of third place, the Swede

Max Anglert moving into sec-

Jose Maria Olazabal, who de-

scribed the bookmakers who

made him favourite for the ti-

lle as "a little bit insanc", was

not changing that view despite

a two-under 70 in only his sec-

ond event back after an 18

Olazabal has now scored un-

der par in four of his first five

rounds back and vesterday re-

ceived the Johnnie Walker

golfer of the month award for

Fehruary for his 12th-place fin-

Seve Ballesteros is involved

in a fight to avoid his fourth suc-

month injury lay-off.

ond with a 66.

Bullish Paul primed for **Odsal opener**

Rugby League DAVE HADFIELD

Super League could not have chosen a better place to launch its eagerly awaited second season tonight than Odsal Stadium, Bradford. If there is one venue where the concept of an allsinging, all-dancing summer spectacle has been an unqualffied success it is at this once

unloved hole in the ground. We give the fans a reason to et there three hours before the kick-off. It's not just a game, it's an occasion," the Bulls captain, Robbie Paul, said.

"We're going to build on all the things we did last year. We'll make so much noise that rugby league will go ballistic." Nobody showcases the event better than Bradford, who ex-pect a crowd in excess of 15,000 to get the season off to a flying start, but even Paul knows that

really matters. The Bulls promise to be an even more formidable propoloss of Graeme Bradley, who shares captaincy duties with Paul, for the first few weeks of the season with a broken

The options that their coach, Matthew Elliott, has at his disposal are not too bad, however, with an international centre. - Paul Loughlin - moving in from the flank and an international winger - Paul Cook - coming into the starting line-up.

John Dorahy's Warrington line-up was a source of controversy last week, when he named lestyn. Harris on the bench while always knowing that he was going to start the game. This week, Harris is out of the starting team and is reported to have a calf injury. Which probably means that he is fully fit and will play the entire 80 minutes.

There is also a doubt about Paul Sculthorpe and Dorahy seems genuinely to have dropped the winger, Richard

Nigel Vagana, disappointing in the centres last week, moves to full-back and Paul tips both. Tony Tatupu, to make a big im-



Henry Paul, the Bradford captain, is at the hub of preparations yesterday for tonight's Super League curtain-raiser

SPORTING DIGEST

pact as the season gets into its it is what happens when they Henare, in favour of Mark stride. "I played with and kick off against Warrington that Forster. against them in New Zealand and Warrington have picked up two brilliant players who can win a match out of nothing," he

Shaun Edwards will not be in

Wigan's side against Halifax on Sunday, even if he makes himself available. Edwards has spent most of the week in Lon-don with his girlfriend, Heather Small, the singer in the pop group M People, who is ex-pecting their child.

"That he hasn't trained all week means that he can't be considered on Sunday," said the Wigan coach, Eric Hughes, who also accepts the growing likeli-hood that Edwards will leave for the London Broncos.

"It's a matter of Shaun know-

said. "If we enforced his contract and he didn't want to be here, we wouldn't get the best out of

Wigan are in talks with Castleford over their transferlisted scrum-half, Tony Smith,

ing where he wants to play," he who Hughes describes as "a ready-made replacement".

Significantly, Castleford have left Smith out of their side for their opening Super League fixture at Salford on Sunday, with the 18-year-old Danny Orr

cessive missed cut this season following a 73, while Howard Clark had a 74 which included a quintuple-bogey eight on the 142-yard 14th where he put three balls into the lake guarding the green.
Steve Richardson, second to

Ballesteros on the 1991 Order of Merit, is facing a fifth missed Torrance slumped to an 81 without a single hirdic.

lan Woosnam said yesterday that he may join Nick Faldo on the United States tour. Woosnam, winner of the Masters in 1991, is considering the switch because of sponsorship spin-offs. For my sponsors to get more deals I must play in America, Woosnam said. In Europe it is now difficult to get those deals."

All Star honour for Chester's Burton

RICHARD TAYLOR

coach for the North in the Bud-weiser League All Star game, against the South at Sheffield Arena on Monday week.

Katja Seizinger won her second

specessive super-giant slalom

race at Vail, Colorado, yester-

day while Hilde Gerg finished

England took a decisive step to-

Championships by beating Wales 113-108 in Ballymoney,

13.5

CLAG

wards ending the seven-year

After five consecutive years

in the League's pottom three, Chester are already guaranteed the most successful season the All Star team, particularly as in the history even if they do not

Mike Burton's transformation of the Chester Jets from no hopers to title challengers has been rewarded with his selection as coach for the North in the Budare pushing for a top-four finish and home advantage in the play-off quarter-finals.

Burton said: "We can still get

Seizinger leads German World Cup sweep

Seizinger, who also won a World Cup super-G race last week at Mammoth Mountain.

California, beat the rest of the

field by a buge margin of

0.08sec while winning with a

England poised to end their seven-year hitch

match today against the defending champions, Scotland, to

England just shaded the

86-70 ahead after 15 ends.

SNOW REPORT - in association with Thomas Cook Ski Direct

Around the resorts

time of 1min 15.73sec.

wrap up the title.

title – taking advantage of a rare mistake by Pernilla Wherg – as Germany claimed the top three the Olympic downhill champion

wait since their last win in the opening five ends 26-25 and by Home International Indoor the half-way mark led 52-50 - Championships by heating but they then pulled away to go

Co Antrim, yesterday.

Cover the last quarter England increased their fead to 21 shots but Wales hit back to be just two

places in the World Cup finals. at the 1994 Lillehammer

a thle ims season and we'll be aiter the play-off final at Wembley. It's a great honour to coach

their third successive win last season to take the series to 4-4.

Burton is one of only five Englishmen taking part in an event

1:16.53 - the second-place fin-

ish giving her enough points to

go to the top of the super-G standings with 490 points. Seizinger ended up second in

the standings with 474 points.

wrapped up the overall and slalom titles, missed a gate and

down with a few ends remain-

ing before England reasserted

the top scorer for the second successive day with a 20-13 win over John Price and David

Ward beat Phil Rowlands 23-17,

while Greg Harlow added Eng-land's third win beating Stephen

Andy Thomson finished as

was disqualified.

their authority.

Rees 18-13.

Wiberg, who had already

dominated by Americans. Sheffield Sharks' Roger Huggins is the only English player in the North's side. Burton's team includes three of his Jets: Russ Saunders, making a record eighth appearance, Hillary Scott

and Billy Singleton. South include three Englishmen - London Towers' Karl Brown, and Peter and Richard

YONEX ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONEMPS (Birm-highest) Meen's quarter-Snake: Cong long (Chr-no) bt P Resmussen (Den) 15-12 15-8. H Arts (Ing) bt Luo Yigang (Cura) 8-15 15-9 15-6. Wospou's quarter-fiesde: Dus Yun (China) bt Zhong Ning (Chros) 5-13 12-11 11-8, Ye Zhooping (Chi-na) bt Kim J-Hyun (S Kor) 11-7 11-1.

NBA: Indiane 92 Adorta 82; Utah 117 New Jersey 102; Chango 108 Philodelphe 104; Washington 104 Vancouver 82; Ottando 96 Houston 95; IA Laheus 109 Golden State 102.

HOME INTERNATIONAL INDOOR CHAMPION-SNPS (Relymoney, Co Antrim): England bt Wales 113-108 (Englatus Inst): 6 Hance in 5 Rece 18-13, G.A. Smit lost to J. Germalade 12-20, A Thom-son in J. Price 20-13, 6 P. Smith lost to M. Ansley 17-22, A. Necos and R. Waste drew 23-23, U Ward bt P. Rowlands 23-17.

The former Australian Test betsman Leo O'Brien, one of only two survivors of the famous Bodyline series against England in 1992-33, died yesterday at the age of 89. Sir Donald Bradmen is now the control Australian purpose of the period.

only Australian survivor of the series.

Gray Australian Survivor 10 the Screen.
SHEFFELD SHELD (First day of four) Sydney.
Tesmene 370 for 4 U Cox 243, R Ponting 64) v
New South Weige. Britishmer Queensland 277;
South Australia 26 for 3. Melbourner Victoria 205
for 9 (S Craig 90not v Western Australia.

PARIS-NICE RACE Fifth stage (197.5km, Counton of Asswerges to Verlinelesset; 1.7 Steels (Bell) 5hr 20mm 48ees; 2 M Counton (Bt.) 3 Listabert (Fr); 4 J Henry (Fr); 5 C Capete (Fr); 5 F Batchin (B); 31 same time, Overall standings (after the stages); 1. Listaber; 18:07.44; 2 F Chanter (Fr) +24sec; 3 7 Steels (Bell) +26sec; 4 L Dudaus (Bell) +36; 5 0 Rous (Fr) +40; 6 C Morest (Fr) +47.

Sunderland have agreed a fee of £125,000 with Aarhus for their Danish Under-21 international midfielder, Kim Hieselberg,

Inswich have signed the 28-yeer-old Bury goalkeeper Lee Bracey on a month's loan. He will cover for Richard Wright

Golf

Badminton

Basketball

Cricket

Football

Davis Cup call-up for Richardson

Andrew Richardson, who is 23

today, was given an early birthday present yesterday when he was included in Britain's squad of five for the Davis Cup tie against Zimhabwe at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre from 4 to 6 April.

The 6ft 7in Lincolnshire left-

Scantlebury of Thames Valley hander has been selected with and Crystal Palace respectively. Tim Henman, Greg Rusedski,

fined Brate leg. Accomigion Staniey 1 Genesionough Trunty O. Undiffile Pirat Division Cup seem-fined first leg. Action 10d 2 Herogapar Town 1. Ubisport Underd Countries League Premier Divisions thereos Sections 0 Boston Town 3. Northern Countries East League Premier Divisions Promby 2 Seby 1. Screwink Divect League Premier Divisions Thereton 3 Bridger Premier Divisions Thereton 3 Bridger Pirat Divisions Charles League Pirat Divisions Charles 1. Service 1 Britt Divisions Symbons 6 West Auctional C; Shaton 1 Consett 3; Durman Cry 1 Seabara Red Star 1. Jewison Wessens League First Divisions League First Divisions Derwen 2 Rossendale 3; Cutherce 0 Mossley 0, Prems and Journal Highland League: But Countries League First Divisions Derwen 2 Rossendale 3; Cutherce Divisions Derwen 3 Research 1 Prof. Petro vin 3-0 on aggregates Acon Institute Countries Coun

Neil Broad and Mark Petchey be Petchey. Henman and Rusedfor the Euro-African zone ski, who have already reached 1 cut in a row after a 78 and Sam group one tie. The winners will five ATP Tour finals between go forward to the World Group them this year, will undoubtedqualifying round from 19 to 21 ly be the two singles players. But September, and if Britain were Richardson could make his successful against Zimbabwe Davis Cup debut in the doubles

they would return to the World Group of the top 16 nations.
One member of Britain's squad will have to be discarded 10 days before the Zimbabwe tie and the odd man out is likely to

and in the qualifying round

sented by the Black brothers, Byron and Wayne, and will not be easy opponents. Byron Black already has two victories over Henman to his credit.

with either Henman or Broad.

Zimbabwe will he repre-

Squash RENAULT AUSTRIAN OPEN (Linz) First in REMAULT AUSTRIAN OPEN (Linz) First round: lanster Khen (Paki tr A Gough (Nan 15-11 15- 10 15-5: P Gregory (Gri bt 0 Satotzer (Aun) 11- 15 15-5 15-5: Gregory (Gri bt 0 Satotzer (Aun) 11- 15 15-5 15-5: Gregory (Gri bt 0 Satotzer (Aun) 11- 10 Medicings (Eng. 15-8 16-17 15-7 15- Jenson (Aus) tr 0 Ryan (Int 15- 10-3-15 15-6 15- 6: Zarak Jahan Khun (Paki bt M Carne (Eng. 17- 16-15-10 8-15 15-10: C Routend (Aus) tot) Purepo Aun (1-15 15-11 15-11 15- 15- 15- Ryan (Aus) bt M Heath (SCO) 13-15 15-14 12-11 ret. Andre Agassi has been named in the US Davis Cup squa0 for the forthcoming matches against the Netherlands. for Gullikson, the team captain, an-

SPRING GRAND TOURNAMENT (Deake, Jepan)
Fifth day of 15: Deahsin Ivan 2, bot 3 to Tochnorada (3-2): Ognishi (3-2) to Maugusato (1-4); Mercrotiqi (4-1) bi Gopro (2-3); Deama (4-1)
bi Yamario (2-3); Hemanoshimi (3-2) bi Shalishima (2-3); Riboo (2-3) bi Nongshio (0-3-2-1);
Angyama (4-1) bi Tochmoseke (3-2); Missoumi (3-2) bi Roborazuma (3-2); Attalachidok (3-2)
bi Assimoseke (1-4); Hejamoum (3-2) bi Ganva (2-3);
Kompu (1-4) bi Reproban (1-4); Bashwitaka (2-3);
Kompu (1-4) bi Reproban (1-4); Bashwitaka (2-3);
Kompu (1-4) bi Reproban (1-4); Dissimose (3-2)
bi Missouria (1-4); Tossmoum (1-3) bi Tomo (0-5); Telestonia (4-1) bi Neo (4-1); Heorophusa (3-4);
bi Missouria (2-3); Takamorami (5-0) bi Pupilishusan (1-4); Missouria (1-4); Missouria (1-4);
lanohane (4-1) bi Tochaquma (1-4);
Reprobas ansence.

Football

7,30 unless stated NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE THIRD DIVISION

I Pyman, J M Olazahal (Spi.) Rack (Swel, P Miscrell, R Boral, R Coles, M Farry Firl, O Salva (Por), C Mason, T Johnstone (20m), S Henderson, M A Methol (Spi.), P Carry, P Quinc (Swel), A Broaderson, M A Methol (Spi.), P Carry, P Quinc (Swel), A Broaderson (Swel, A Broaderson, T J J Sandons (Swel), S Luna (Spi.), Heagegman (Swel, G Dr., M Hallberg, Glave), S (Gaptageron) (Dr., R Caydon, J Rower (Swel, M Methodor, R Lee, J Cocerts (Mg), B Lane, F Folk (Spi.), K Fifseson (Swel), A Humer, A Sherborna, M Tunnocidi, M Gogon (Aus.), J Gronhogen (Swel, M McLeton, R Lee, J Cocerts (Mg), B Lane, F Folk (Spi.), K Fifseson (Swel), A Humer, A Sherborna, M Tunnocidi, M Gogon (Aus.), J Gronhogen (Swel), S McAlaster.

KENYAN COPEN (Muthalign), Leading first-round socree (GB or in unless stationity 65 P Hamson: 65 S Daniels (SA); J Cartero (Aug. 67 M Mater; 8 MCColt. C Van der Verbe (Neth): S Burnet; F Furmas (Neth); GB M Ratmann (Fri); M Studis, N Mieleen (Not): K Canson (19); P J Panesar (Men); GB S Corner (Mg); P Singston; L Markeson (Lee); E Carlberg (Swel), Selectaet; 70 O Jones, S Grown, J Vingse; J Hawkesonth, A Clagor, 71, M Gregon; P Singston; W Guy, R Enwarts: R Denastae; 72 M McGure; G Haney; R Trworth, O Lynn.

MREA'S WORLD CUP Quelifier (Rusin Lumpur): 9/12 places: Switzeriand 2 Belanus O: South Africa 4 Indano O: 5/8th: Canada 2 Argentina O: Motings 3 Belgum O: Seath-finalis: Spain 5 New Zeeland 1; Poland O Kopea 1. Canada and Matajos join the Noru semi-finalis: as qua-tiess for the World Cup in the Netherlands ned

ice hockey

Rugby Union

SCOTLAND A (v France A, Rodaz, today): D Lee (London Scottsh), D Stark (Metosc), C Nur-ray (Hawck), R Erikstein (London Scottish, J Nerr (Matomans), A Donaldson (Currie), G Burns (Matomians), M Browne (Metosc), G Bullock (Mest of Scottonn), S Fergiason (Peobless, S Men-tay (Bertford), S Grimes (Watsonans), C Meth-r (Matsonans), C Hage (Metosc, capil, S Holistes (London Scottish), Replacements: B Lang (Herox's FP), S Richol (Metrock), I Pair-ley (Metos), S Raid (Boroughrum, J Manacon (String County), J May (Herock).

Spooker THAILAND OPEN (Bengkok) Quarter-Snebs: Exdon (Eng) bt J Parroz (Eng) 5-0; R O'Sullos (Eng) bt S Lee (Eng) 5-3.

Edmburgh have signed Jonathan Fors-gren, the Swedish international, as a replacement for the Italian Test rider.

UNIBOND LEAGUE First Division: Radciffe Box LINUIET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE John O'Hara

LEAGUE OF WALES: Ebbs Vale v Combran. Rugby League

STONES SUPER LENGUE: Bradford v Wernington, Print Division: Dewisbury v Hub Kington Rovers 17.451.

Rugby Union

TODAY'S FIXTURES A SINGLE

nounced on Wednesday that Agassi,

Jonathan Stark and Rick Leach will join Jim Courier in the American team that will play the quarter-final matches on 4-6 April in Newport Beach, California.

4-6 April in Newport Beach, California. COPENHAGEN MEN'S OPEN Singles, Birst round: 1 Carbonell (Spi bir E Frien 18th 6-2 6-2 K Ulivett (SA) bir G Solves (Fin 6-4 7-5): F Federien (Den) to Divacek (CR Rep) 6-2 6-7 6-3 Section fround:) knoste (Slocek) bit M Norman (Swin 4-6 6-4, 6-2 1 Johnston (Swin Jah -0-0)c (Riva) 4-6 6-3 6-2; K Nuclea (Slocek) bit F Surfor (Fin 6-1 4-6 6-1). A Boetsch (Fin hez, withdrawn due professionellen's CUP (Indian Welle, Colff) Singles, quarter-Bionic M J Ferrander (IS) bit C Martinez (Spi 6-4 6-4; I Spriny (Rom) bit N Taubol (Fin 6-4 6-1). Davemport (US) bir V Williams (US) 6-4 5-7 7-6.

Basketball

UNDER-21 INTERNATIONAL: France e Scotland 16.01 off Ales).
REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: Watch Universities (F. 30) off Commercials . Engine Universities (F. 30) off Commercials Matchessa Aberawan v Bristo (F. 0). Bedford v Gloucester: Moseley v Northamarton: Northigham v Lebester (F. 15); Cross Reys v Northamarton: Northigham v Lebester (F. 15); Cross Reys v Northamarton: Northigham v Lebester (F. 15); Cross Reys v Northamarton: Northighamarton: Northighamarton: Northamarton: Nort

Other sports BADMINTON: Yones Al-England (ships "NIA, Birmingham).

SWIMMING: British Grand Prix meet (Carpit) CABLE TEXNES: Engish Champiorships (Engision).

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

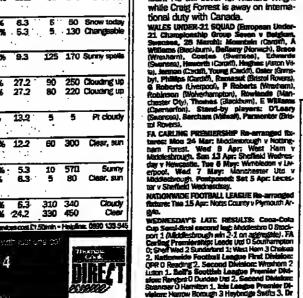
Draw date: 12/3/97. The winning numbers: 3, 4, 5, 16, 22, 25. Bonus number: 12. Total Sales: £26,886,315. Prze Fund: £12,098,841 (45% of ticket sales).

CATEGORY	No. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER	
Maich 6 (Jackpoi)	2	£1,667,110	£3,334,220	
March 5 plus bonus ball	20	£51,295	£1,025,900	
Match 5	571	£1.122	£6411,662	
Match 4	32.012	£44	£1.408,528	
Match 3	568,588	£10	£5.622.220	
TOTALS	601,293		£12.092.190	
Comelot Group pic. Players must be 15 or	over	Breakage (prizes rounded down to nearest £1), £2,651		

IT GOULD DE TOUL THE NATIONAL LOTTERY" in the event of any discrepancy in the above, the data contained in Cometal computer system shall prevail

SKI HOTLINE Latest snow and weather reports from: 180+ resorts in Europe and Phone or fax: 0891 333 110 AUSTRIA SKI SNAPSHOT 100% 5.3 At-a-glance fax guide to snow CANADA conditions at 180+ resorts world FRANCE ... wide: 90% 27.2 90 250 Clouding up 85% 27.2 80 220 Clouding up 0897 500 601 Where to find the Call SKIEAX - the ski facts: 100% 12.2 60 300 Clear, sur 0897 300 301 NATIED STATES For a tax list of 180+ 0990 100 843

Call Ski Direct on 01733 33 55 14





Davies back for his Wales swan-song

Rugby Union CHRIS HEWETT

Rob Andrew's startling return to the England squad yesterday may have been greeted by an impromptu chorus of "Here comes the Messiah" from his colleagues, but the real Chosen One will be on the other side of half-way when tomorrow's Triple Crown match kicks off in Cardiff. Nine years after he last started a Five Nations game for his country. Jonathan Davies will take the field clad in the

most mystical sporting jersey of them all: the Welsh No 10 shirt.

If it sounds like rugby's equivalent of a Darby and Joan reunion - both men are in their dotage at 34 - it could hardly he more appropriate. So many memories and fond farewells are on tomorrow's agenda -Davies, Andrew, Will Carling and the Arms Park itself have reached the point of no return that the nostalgia will seep from every pore.

By some distance the most ifted outside-half to emerge in Britain since the halcyon days

of Barry John and Phil Bennett, Davies is quite plainly not the player he was prior to his move to rugby league in 1988. That being said, he has more than enough know-how and pure footballing instinct to make a decent fist of filling in for his injured apprentice, the precocious Arwel Thomas, and England, in particular, suffered such traumas in trying to contain him during his golden run in the mid-1980s that it will be no great surprise if they freeze

the moment he touches the

Miracles, however, are always at a premium, even for a player considered by his nation to he touched with genius. The Weish delayed their team announcement in the belief that a whole casualty list of injuries would clear up in time for the championship finale but when they named it yesterday, it became clear that they had acted more in hope than expectation.

leuan Evans, Scott Gibbs and Colin Charvis, three of the more influential performers among a resurgent band of Red Dragons, bowed out re-

hictantly after training and even though Simon Hill, Nigel Davies and Kingsley Jones are no strangers to the rigours of international rugby, the fabric of Kevin Bowring's promising but still fallible side looked substantially weakened.

At least the coach was able to report a double silver lining in the shape of front row for-wards Christian Loader and David Young. Both first-chose props were declared fit to lock horns with the old enemy and in the light of the fact that Mike Voyle, the inexperienced

Llanelli lock, will be attempting to live up to his obvious potential in the second row, Bowring was understandably relieved that he could depend on a tried and trusted unit at the sharp

As for Davies, the old confidence was much in evidence, even though he admitted that be would start the game on "one leg" due to a knee problem. "I know we've lost some important players for this game, but we will still have 15 internationals on the pitch and irrespective of who plays on the day, a game against

England is always an enormous challenge that hrings the best out of us.

"To be honest, I was disappointed not to be picked for the previous Five Nations games: certainly. I thought they might have brought me off the bench when things were going wrong against Ireland.

"While this is an exciting chance for me to bow out on a high - Saturday will definitely be my last international appearance for Wales - nothing could ever match the excitement of winning my first cap, which

come back in my mid-thirties and play agame against England is something I'm proud to achieve. A nice bat-trick would finish my career perfectly."

into a few English hearts, noth:

Tug of

war over

Waddle

Chris Waddle walked out of Bradford City with the intention of opining Nottingham Forest yesterday - and straight into a row between the two clubs. The veteran winger hopes to sign for Forest today as a player in time to make his debut against Liverpool tomorrow, but Bradford are seething about

Waddle mistakenly thought he had an escape clause in his contract, but Bradford are demanding a fee for him - or the striker Jason Lee - as com-The angry First Division club

ALAN NIXON



Mr Mulligan proves to be the real McCoy

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON reports from Cheltenham

It was not exactly an Irish winner, but for the hordes that have spilled over the water to Gloucestershire this week it was the next best thing. The Irish-hred Mr Mulligan captured the Gold Cup yesterday for the Ulster partnership of jockey Tony Mc-Coy and trainer Noel Chance. The huge horse may be billeted in Lambourn, but the roar he received on his return was from folk who thought of him

as one of their own. Mr Mulligan, it has to be said. is no oil painting, rather something a child might produce on the kitchen table with crayon. When he was first brought to

Michael Worcester, it was sug-gested he did not check out the horse too carefully. "Louise Cooper, who is a spotter for us, told me to huy him." Worcester related yesterday. "But she warned me not to look at him or I would hate the horse. I just wrote out a cheque for £18,000.

"He isn't a picture and when Noel saw him he was disappointed at this great orange thing with white spots." Pretty is as pretty does, however, and Mr Mulligan was just about the best novice chaser last year until he whacked one fence

too many at this meeting 12 months ago. This season he was destined for second place in the King George VI Chase at Kempton before landing on his nose at the ulimate barrier. Since that day his trainer has always had one eye on the parade ring yesterday. Barton

clock. A haematoma the size of a grape fruit in the horse's hack proved difficult to treat. "I never thought we'd miss this race hut it got a bit uncomfortable."

There was little agreeable, ei-ther, about the gelding's final piece of work at Newbury 10 days ago. Mr Mulligan performed like the beasts once employed by United Dairies. "We sent him over two miles and he was so bad I promise you that if he had run in the bumper here he would have finished two furlongs behind," McCoy said. "But after that I schooled him over eight fences at Lambourn and he went quicker than at any stage at

Newbury. I was much happier. Neverthless, the binoculars were largely trained elsewhere when Mr Mulligan entered the Bank, the old soldier, carried neck markings that lend him the appearance of a spotty adolescent, while the diminutive Dorans Pride tip-tocd around as if the tarmac had been mined. Mr 3.15: Chettenberg Gold Cop (3m 2f 110yds)

A P McCoy 20-1 O Waish 33-1 J P Broderick 10-1

Mulligan, a chestnut and fawn creature, reminded of a horse tied up to a rail outside the cowboy saloon. Then, as the field filed out, came a telling gesture. "He shook his head violently,"

that when he's feeling on very good terms with himself."

The 20-1 shot had others shaking their heads when he collided with a fence, but that was the wake-up call. "When I gave him a little smack he warmed up and I knew when I let him stride on that he was warming

to his task," McCoy said. Other riders had less encouraging messages. Conor O'Dwyer had to pull up Imperial Call after the gelding behaved like an impostor of the horse that collected this crown 12 months ago, and a similar fate befell Danoli. Coome Hill was run off his feet and One Man all but collapsed in the straight. Up front, the orange thing with spots put nine lengths between

Owner considers cloning

his Cigar without fire

They call it Folly House. Chance has swiftly made him and his nearest pursuer. himself a popular addition to For McCoy it was the climax the echelon of trainers in the Chance said. "And he only does of an outstanding Festival,

his role as a family man, and

about his only extravagance is a tumhler of whiskey in the Queen's Arms at East Garston. As he stood on the pinnacle yesterday it must have seemed a long way down to the place where Chance started on his trek as a toiling small trainer on the Curragh. "I've struggled for years training in Ireland and I now know there is light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

There is a God." Cheltenham reports, page 25 | sume training on Monday.

are also considering reporting Forest to the Premier League for an illegal approach to Wad-dle, who is under contract for the rest of the season.

the approach.

Waddle announced his departure before training yesterday morning, but was ordered not to travel to Nottingham until a fee was arranged. Instead, he opened a sports shop in Leeds rather than stay at Brad-

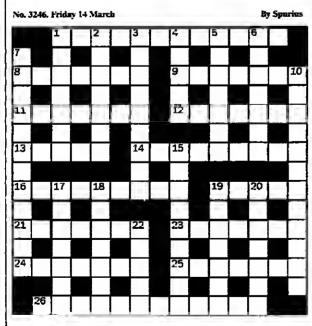
ford's training ground.

One player happy to join
Bradford City is the Bolton Wanderers goalkeeper, Aidan Davison, who is moving to the Valley Parade club on a free transfer after a year in the shadows at Bolton. He stands modest figure who delights in by to make his debut at Reading tomorrow in place of the

suspended Jonathan Gould. Jay Notley, the 18-year-old Charlton midfielder, was yesterday given the go-ahead to resume his football career by the

Football Association. Notley failed a drugs test in November last year when he tested positive for cocaine, cannabis and Ecstasy. While serving a three-month ban he underwent rehabilitation at an FA-approved centre. He will re-

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

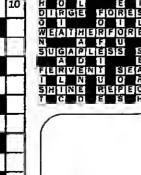


- Agricultural enterprises
- where plants are grwn? (7.5)
- Does nothing about alternative holiday destinations (7)
- 11 Runner from Briston! (7) 12 One's sure to have a five o'-
- clock shadow (7) 13 Suspictuous fellow, one easily frightened (5)
- 14 Part of sentence I've put last tit's the end (9) 16 Took one's leave? (9) 19 Lamp's out for part of church 5
- service (51 2) Military leader from Havana
- very green (7) 24 Acted incisively, shifting de-

bris around front of com-

B

making a comeback in opera. [17] 23 Mere lad's nervous, being



- 25 Learnt with some difficulty about transcendental num
- How to buy things for cash
- prayer! (9) sailors with stories (5) As chemists know, it's a toxic substance (7)
- her, constantly recurring (7) 26 it's the way of the medical
- Wet paint (6)
- 3 Politician first to suggest a
- Cocktail dress needing knack to get in? (7) Ultimate tribute from a grateful electorate? (4, 2, 6)

- 15 Verdict shows discrimination Speak up when entertaining 17 Left western Europe for
- 10 They're normally awarded seconds after the races finish



African Country (7)

18 Measure that's soundly based

19 Come before President seek-

20 Not in favour of putting profits into alternative technolo-

gy? (7) Old theologian, extremely

lazy, strange to relate (5)

ing amendment to decree (7)

When he was on a racetrack. Cigar was always a champion.

but when it comes to the mating game, he is anything but. Despine more than 30 attempts. the best horse of recent years has so far failed to get a mare into foal, and Allen Paulson. Cigar's former owner, is getting so desperate that vesterday he suggested cloning as a remedy for his horse's ills

We are certainly looking at cloning." Paulson told the New York Post. "Up to last week, 16 of 31 bred to Cigar have been tested, and none is in foal, There's no life in his sperm at all. It's a big shock." Quite what Paulson might hope to achieve hy such a

technical difficulties - is hard to say. The sperm of a clone of Cigar would, almost by definition, be as lifeless as those of the original. In order to race a clone, meanwhile. Paulson would need to overcome international agreements which ban artificial insemination and, by implication at least, cloning. That Paulson could even sug-

gest such a thing probably says more about his frustration at seeing the most valuable racehorse in the world depreciate even more rapidly than the average betting slip. Cigar's track career, which included a sequence of 16 successive victories, was the most lucrative in racing history, earning prizemoney of almost \$10million (£6m), and a successful retirement to stud could have taken course of action - even if it were possible to overcome the huge

the total far higher. When Dolly, the cloned

sheep, was unveiled by the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh last month, the possibility of per-forming a similar operation with a horse became a little more credible, but if Paulson believes it is imminent, he is sadly mistaken. "Whether it is transferable to other species, we don't know," Harry Griffin, of the Institute, said. "Other attempts will be made with cattle. and then probably with pigs."

Arkle Chase and Champion

Hurdle on Tuesday. The man

from Co Antrim was a Flat jock-

ey until he could not do his

trousers up and has already climbed many of National Hunt racing's towers by the age of 22.

Noel Chance's career has

been less meteoric. It took him

20 years to train 100 winners in

his homeland before the ice-

cream man cometh. Michael

Worcester, whose company

manufactures ice-cream cones,

installed him as a private train-

er in Lambourn two years ago

Chance's yard has an admirably realistic name for the specula-

tive husiness of horseracing.

Cloning might eventually allow the owners of prime bloodstock to produce carbon copies, hut whether this would be desirable for the sport as a whole must be questionable. The genetic variety which is encouraged by traditional breeding methods is generally a good thing for the breed, and even rich and desperate men like Allen Paulson may find that such considerations will stand in their way.

Graveney is new chairman of selectors

Cricket

David Graveney has, as expected, heen appointed as chairman of England's selectors, but there was some surprise over the choice of the other two

former England captains, but both Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting are still playing in the County Championship. Gooch has combined playing

and selecting before hut that was not popular with the then chairman of selectors. members of his panel. Both are Raymond Illingworth.

Gravency, who has been appointed until 1999, will stay as general secretary of the Professional Cricketers' Association, but there will be no conflict of interest on disciplinary matters, which will be handled by the England Management Committee. Derek Pringle, page 27

CPublished by Newspaper Publishing PLC. I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 SDL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01988 840370. Recisional at a newspaper with the Part Office

هكذا من الأصل

